Belonging in a Translocal Field:

A Case Study on Second-Generation Eritreans Living in Switzerland

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Contents

List of Figures

Summary

This thesis examines the negotiation of belonging of second-generation Eritreans. It examines how the children of Eritrean migrants in Switzerland negotiate their relations to both Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora. In doing so, the thesis contributes first to the academic debates on the Eritrean diaspora and second to debates examining the negotiation and formation identity and belonging of post-migrant individuals.

The negotiation of belonging in a translocal field is examined in a case study of second-generation Eritreans living in Switzerland. The study aims to contribute to academic consideration of the Eritrean diaspora and specifically the second-generation Eritreans' sense of belonging. It also promotes a distinct approach to studies on the formation of identity and belonging of post-migrant individuals. The study employs a combination of conceptual approaches: First, by drawing on the concept of translocality and belonging, the thesis takes situatedness within settings of mobility and migration into account and advocates the incorporation of locality, contexts, and socio-spatial interrelations into studies on identity formation in multi-local settings spanning geographical boundaries. Second, the thesis focuses on second-generation Eritreans' (trans-)local experiences and encounters and examines how experiences and encounters at specific localities and their socio-spatial interrelations influence the negotiation of a sense of belonging.

The thesis draws on a qualitative multi-sited research approach that combines interviews in Switzerland with participant observation accompanying a group of second-generation Eritreans on their journey to Eritrea. Such a methodological approach pays attention to personal stories and narratives, individual activities and behaviours, and participants' interpretations of observations, perceptions, and practices in relation to specific localities and socio-spatial experiences and their influence on their sense of belonging.

The results of this research reveal the importance of experiencing and encountering various localities and contexts in the second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of affiliations to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora. The thesis argues that the real experiences of places and their socio-spatial interrelations cause second-generation individuals to reflect on their own identity and sense of belonging. These findings indicate that focus on the local and on socio-spatial experiences provide important new insights into the identity formation process in transnational contexts. The thesis concludes that examining experiences of local socio-spatial contexts may enable the examination of identity formation and the negotiation of belonging of other groups within and beyond the Eritrean diaspora.

Key words: translocality, belonging, second generation, Eritrean diaspora, Eritrea

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Dissertation analysiert die Aushandlung von Zugehörigkeit am Beispiel von Personen eritreischer Herkunft, die in der Diaspora geboren und/oder aufgewachsen sind und heute in der Schweiz wohnen. Sie geht der Frage nach, wie Kinder eritreischer Migrantinnen und Migranten, welche das Gebiet des heutigen Eritrea im Zuge des Unabhängigkeitskrieges mit Äthiopien (1961–1991) verlassen haben, ihre Beziehung und Zugehörigkeit zu Eritrea und zur eritreischen Diaspora formen.

Ziel der Dissertation ist es, einen Beitrag zur wissenschaftlichen Debatte über die eritreische Diaspora zu leisten. Im Fokus stehen dabei die Aushandlung und Bildung von Identitäten und Zugehörigkeiten von Eritreerinnen und Eritreer der sogenannten zweiten Generation. Darüber hinaus will die Fallstudie einen konzeptionellen Ansatz aufzeigen, der für die Analyse von Identitätsbildung und Aushandlung von Zugehörigkeit von Personen mit Migrationshintergrund im transnationalen Feld geeignet ist.

Bei der Konzeptualisierung werden verschiedene Ansätze zusammengeführt: Die Kombination der Konzepte *Translocality* und *Belonging* erlaubt es, die Situiertheit und Verortung innerhalb Mobilitäts- und Migrationssettings zu fassen, und die Bedeutung von Orten und den damit verbundenen sozialräumlichen Kontexten in Studien zur Identitätsbildung in multilokalen grenzübergreifenden Settings stärker zu berücksichtigen. Empirisch beschäftigt sich die Arbeit mit (trans-)lokalen Erlebnissen, Erfahrungen und Begegnungen der Eritreerinnen und Eritreer der zweiten Generation. Dabei identifiziert sie spezifische Orte in Eritrea wie beispielsweise das Zuhause von Verwandten und die Nachbarschaften und Ortschaften in denen diese leben, Hotels, Restaurant und bestimmte Nachtclubs, welche typischerweise mit Begegnungen mit anderen Diaspora Eritreerinnen und Eritreer verknüpft sind, aber auch Lokalitäten in der Diaspora wie öffentliche Plätze oder der Diskurs über Eritreerinnen und Eritreer in der Schweiz und zeigt somit exemplarisch, wie Erfahrungen und Begegnungen an bestimmten Orten und sozialräumlichen Kontexten den Aushandlungsprozess von Zugehörigkeit beeinflussen. Durch diese Fokussierung auf lokale und konkrete Alltagserfahrungen, Begegnungen, Erlebnisse und Praktiken in physischen wie auch sozialen Räumen, zeigt die Dissertation auf, wie Angehörige der zweiten Generation ihre Identität formen und ihr Zugehörigkeitsgefühl über geographische Grenzen hinweg aushandeln.

Methodologisch stützt sich die Arbeit auf einen qualitativen *multi-sited* Forschungsansatz. Dieser ermöglicht die multiplen Lokalitäten zu berücksichtigen und miteinzubeziehen. Die Kombination von Interviews und partizipativer Beobachtung, die unter anderem eine gemeinsame Reise mit Eritreerinnen und Eritreer der zweiten Generation nach Eritrea beinhaltete, ermöglichte es, individuelle Geschichten, Erlebnisse, Aktivitäten und Verhaltensweisen in Bezug auf spezifische Lokalitäten und

sozialräumliche Erfahrungen sowie deren Auswirkungen auf das Zugehörigkeitsgefühl zu erforschen.

Die Forschungsergebnisse belegen die zentrale Bedeutung von Orten und Kontexten. Das Erleben und Erfahren von spezifischen Orten und Kontexten gestaltet die Aushandlung der Zugehörigkeit zu Eritrea und der eritreischen Diaspora und führt dazu, dass Individuen der zweiten Generation über ihre eigne Identität und ihre Zugehörigkeit reflektieren. Die Ergebnisse dieser Dissertation lassen darauf schliessen, dass eine Fokussierung auf 'das Lokale' und den sozialräumlichen Kontext sowie die Sichtbarmachung des Erfahrens und Begegnens an diesen Orten wichtige Erkenntnisse über den Identitätsbildungsprozess in sogenannten transnationalen Kontexten liefern.

PART I
Framing the Research Project

1 Introduction

Recent reports of young Eritreans fleeing their country portray an ongoing "mass exodus" (Hirt 2013: 4) that has been taking place for almost a decade, and the number of Eritreans applying for asylum in various different European countries has grown in recent years. According to Eurostat, over 166,000 Eritreans applied for asylum in the EU and EFTA member states between 2012 and end–2016 (eurostat 2016). This development has turned the spotlight on Eritrea and triggered international and national political debates. Various European governments as well as international bodies and organisations have published reports on both Eritrea and the Eritrean asylum seekers (Danish Immigration Service 2014; European Asylum Support Office 2016; State Secretariat for Migration 2015b; United Kingdom Home Office 2016; United Nations Human Rights Council 2016). As a result, awareness of Eritrean asylum seekers and the increasing Eritrean diaspora has grown amongst the general public. However, emigration from Eritrea is not a purely recent phenomenon. As early as 1991, it is estimated, up to one million Eritreans were living in exile as a result of the 30-year struggle for independence (Connell and Killion 2011: 444–445; Kibreab 2007: 99). Today, the Eritrean diaspora broadly consists of two waves or periods of emigration whose reasons for leaving Eritrea differ (see Chapter 2.1). Further, since Eritreans of the first period of emigration from Eritrea migrated over 20 years ago, there is now also a generation of Eritreans who were born and/or raised in the diaspora, termed the second generation.

The focus of this research project is on these second-generation Eritreans, children of those who left Eritrea before the turn of the millennium. The more specific research interest has been particularly influenced by Conrad (2006a, 2010), who provides insights into the second-generation Eritreans and their relationships to Eritrea. However, since the early 2000s, when Conrad conducted her study, the transnational space of the second-generation Eritreans has been in a state of flux. Developments such as the arrival of a large number of Eritrean asylum seekers in Europe (see Chapter 2) and the sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council in 2009 (see Hirt 2013, 2015b) have shaped the context in which second-generation Eritreans grow up and develop a sense of who they are and where and to whom they belong. I assume that these developments profoundly affect the frames of reference in which second-generation Eritreans negotiate their affiliations to their ancestral home. Thus, I examine how second-generation Eritreans negotiate their sense of belonging in today's changing transnational field.

The main objectives of this PhD thesis are to generate new knowledge about the Eritrean diaspora that contributes to the academic literature on this broad topic and specifically on second-generation Eritreans' formation and negotiation of identity and belonging. This study's focus on the second generation provides new insights into a

hitherto rather understudied group within the Eritrean diaspora and thus into the Eritrean diaspora in general. Its emphasis on localities and socio-spatially interrelated contexts adds a new dimension to the existing literature on second-generation Eritreans' relationships and connectedness to Eritrea and contributes to the understanding of the interrelations between the second-generation Eritreans and Eritrea. Furthermore, this research contributes to the rather scant contemporary knowledge about the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland, an immigrant community of growing importance (see Chapter 2.3). Further, it contributes to a better understanding of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland and even beyond; as yet, the general public seems to perceive Eritreans as a rather homogenous community, largely because it is unaware of the heterogeneity within the Eritrean diaspora. In addition, this thesis contributes conceptually and methodologically to the debates about belonging and identity of second-generation individuals. Its translocal perspective grounds the formation of identity in transnational contexts, through its attention to localities and socio-spatial contexts and interconnections (see Chapter 3.3). The multi-sited qualitative research approach that involved interviews in Switzerland and participant observation of a group of second-generation Eritreans on their journey to Eritrea (see Chapter 4) enabled close study of such localities and socio-spatial experiences through personal stories and narratives, individual activities and behaviours, and participants' interpretations of observations, perceptions, and practices. Thus, the applied conceptual and methodological framework has proved a useful analytical tool for investigating the formation of belonging and identity of the children of migrant parents and post-migrants[1] in a transnational field.

This thesis is structured in two parts.

Part I presents the frame this research project. First, it outlines the research questions and objectives of this project, reviews previous knowledge in the field of Eritrean diaspora studies and provides a short overview of the formation and development of the Eritrean diaspora with a particular focus on Switzerland as a country of residence. It further outlines the project's overall conceptual and methodological framework, illustrates the key findings, provides condensed overviews of each research paper (papers in full lengths see Part II), and presents a conclusion to the main research questions and an outlook on possible future work on Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora.

[1] Post-migrant and post-migration are terms that "emerged among artists and intellectuals in Berlin/Germany who refuse to be labeled as 'migrants' or 'immigrants' and made the simple objects of national 'integration'-politics" (Schramm 2017). They refer to a phase after migration has happened but do not imply the end of migration (Foroutan 2015). I take the view that the term 'post-migrant' may be helpful in overcoming a simplistic association of individuals with migration or with being foreign. Further, the term seems to ignite new debates about integration or assimilation and about the role of migration stories, narratives, and experiences (Wiegand 2013).

Part II consists of the three research papers that form the core of this PhD thesis. The three papers each discuss aspects of the second-generation Eritreans' formation and negotiation of identity and belonging:

- Paper I "Diaspora tourism and the negotiation of belonging: journeys of young second-generation Eritreans to Eritrea" (Graf 2017), published in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, outlines the effects of the various localities that second-generation Eritreans' experience in the course of journeys to Eritrea on sense of belonging.
- Paper II "'We look similar and have the same geographical origin': translocal encounters of second-generation Eritreans with a new generation of refugees from Eritrea" (Graf and Thieme 2016), published in *Geographica Helvetica*, focuses on Switzerland and the influence of encounters with new asylum seekers from Eritrea on second-generation Eritreans' identity. This is a co-authored article. The two authors agreed that the individual contribution of the main author, Samuel Graf, involving data collection, data analysis and writing, amounts to 90 per cent.
- Paper III "Politics of belonging and the Eritrean diaspora youth: Generational transmission of the decisive past", re-submitted in revised form to *Geoforum*, discusses the generational transmission of the Eritrean history as a means of promoting and maintaining Eritrean national identity amongst the Eritrean diaspora youth.

1.1 Research questions and research objectives

There is a large body of literature on the Eritrean diaspora focusing on Eritrean identity and nationalism (see Chapter 2.2). Nonetheless, there is little research on Eritrean identity and nationalism that involves the Eritrean diaspora youth or the second-generation Eritreans (see Andall 2002; Arnone 2010; Conrad 2006a, 2010; Hassan 2008; Nolting von 2002; Tecle 2012; Zerat 2009). Thus, further empirical research is needed into second-generation Eritreans and their way of living in the transnational space into which they were born. Factors such as the maturation of Eritrean diaspora youth, their acquired life experiences, and globalisation in general may affect the second-generation Eritreans' relation and affiliation to their ancestral home country and thus influence their sense of belonging and identity (Schmitz-Pranghe 2010: 31; Tesfamichael 2010: 8). Furthermore, such recent developments as the growth of Eritrean communities and increasing public and political debates on Eritrea in Europe may have unpredictable effects on second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging. Switzerland seems to present a particularly interesting context. In the last decade, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland has developed from a small community that was scarcely noticed to one of the most prominent communities of non-European foreign nationals in Switzerland (see Chapter 2.3). Consequently, debates about Eritrea and Eritreans have recently arisen in Switzerland. Hence, the situation in Switzerland

has changed, and the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland now presents a rather dynamic field. Thus, I have formulated two overall research questions; while the first is specifically on second-generation Eritreans, the second refers to approaching and analysing second-generation individuals' identity formation more generally:

How do second-generation Eritreans living in Switzerland constitute their affiliations, relations, and sense of belonging to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora and negotiate their Eritrean identity in today's translocal field?

How can the second-generation individuals' negotiation of identity and belonging be studied and conceptually and methodologically approached?

As a human geographer, I put particular emphasis on localities and socio-spatial interrelationships. I have identified two major aspects on which I focus my research: First, I emphasise the influence of experiencing localities and socio-spatial contexts on the process of developing affiliations and a sense of belonging. Such localities may be found in Eritrea, in Switzerland, and in the transnational space of the Eritrean diaspora. Second, I consider the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. In this way, I reveal how the recent development of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland influences second-generation Eritreans' relation to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora and their sense of belonging in general. Both aspects deal with physical places and more abstract or socially constructed locations (see Chapter 3) as well as the encounters and experiences of second-generation Eritreans in them. Thus, I have operationalised the research through several subquestions:

- What are the important localities and socio-spatial contexts that influence the second-generation Eritreans' identity formation and their negotiation of belonging to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora?
- How do second-generation Eritreans experience and encounter specific localities and the people in them? How do these experiences and encounters affect their affiliations and relations to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora?
- What are the effects and influences of narratives, stories, and individual memories on the negotiation of belonging and identity?
- How do recent developments and the changing Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland affect second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging and identity?
- How can identity formation and the negotiation of belonging in cross-border contexts be conceptualised? What methodological approach enables the study of identity formation of second-generation individuals?

It is important to note that the research project only examines interrelations between second-generation Eritreans and Eritrea, Eritreans, or the Eritrean diaspora; it disregards the negotiation of belonging to Switzerland and its society. However, as children of migrants normally grow up in between two countries in some sense, the

country of residence constitutes an important frame of reference for belongingness and identity too. Furthermore, a huge variety of such factors as ethnicity, race, citizenship, and integration constitute other crucial aspects of the negotiation of belonging within a transnational sphere. Thus, I would like to stress that this thesis analyses the negotiation of belonging of second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland from just one perspective among many.

1.2 Research design and structure of the thesis

In order to investigate the research questions and subquestions, I conducted empirical research between 2013 and 2015 in the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. My firm belief that identity and belonging need not be understood as essentialist concepts but as constructed and negotiated by individuals (see Chapter 3) led me to apply a qualitative research approach. It was in this manner that I explored the individual narratives and personal experiences and activities of second-generation Eritreans. As a result of the multi-sited research approach, I was able to identify various specific localities and socio-spatial contexts beyond national borders that are important to negotiating belonging.

A qualitative research process typically involves close connection and mutual interdependence between the individual stages of the whole project (Flick 2007: 123). To meet this demand, I applied an iterative or circular research design (see Flick 2007: 122–130). Moreover, I argue that the specific format of a compilation or article PhD thesis (see paragraph below) encourages, demands, and reinforces a circular process, as the paper-writing procedure requires the researcher to publish results while simultaneously collecting and analysing further data, to attend to theoretical and academic debates and to stay current with existing research.

This thesis is composed of three academic articles that illustrate various aspects of the research project (see Part II). The individual articles each approach specific topics of the main research questions. Each paper thus discusses a different aspect of negotiating belonging by second-generation Eritreans with special regard to localities. The articles explore the effects of localities and their concomitant socio-spatial interrelations, the experience of such contexts, and the generational transmission of Eritrean identity to the second generation, and they reveal how these issues influence the sense of belonging of second-generation Eritreans. The articles focus on various locations on a larger scale—Eritrea, Switzerland, and the Eritrean diaspora—that each involve specific localities on a local level. As a whole, the papers illustrate how second-generation Eritreans encounter these socio-spatially interconnected localities. Together, they suggest the central importance of experiencing such localities and encountering their socio-spatial contexts to developing a sense of belonging.

Part I presents the thematic, conceptual, and methodological background and provides more detail about the entire research process. It is divided into six chapters.

- Chapter 1 sets the thematic frame and scope of this research. It introduces the research topic and the concrete research questions. Furthermore, it provides information about the structure of this thesis. This helps the reader to understand its format and guides him or her through it.
- Chapter 2 focuses on the Eritrean diaspora's formation and development. It discusses the two distinct periods of migration from Eritrea, which involve two generations of Eritrean refugees. It reviews the scientific literature on Eritrean identity in relation to the second generation. Chapter 2 then considers the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. It provides background knowledge and context information vitally relevant to this research project and its findings.
- Chapter 3 discusses the key concepts and theoretical frameworks applied in the research.
- Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach. It provides insights into the implementation and operationalisation of the research process, from planning through data collection to data analysis and interpretation.
- Chapter 5 reveals the key findings identified and discussed in the three research papers. Further, it provides synopses of the individual research papers and their contributions, which can be found in Part II of this thesis in full length.
- Chapter 6 draws a conclusion that answers and reflects on the main research questions. Finally, it provides a short outlook on future research avenues.

2 The Eritrean diaspora

"The Eritrean diaspora is a refugee community" (Conrad 2005: 219) with its origin in the 1960s and the 30-year war of independence against Ethiopia. Emigration from Eritrea decreased when the country became independent in the 1990s, but the Eritrean diaspora has been growing in numbers again since the turn of the millennium. To understand both the formation and the structure of the Eritrean diaspora, it is crucial to enlarge upon the historical and political development of Eritrea. These represent not only important reasons for Eritreans to leave their country but also account for the specific composition of and dynamics within the Eritrean diaspora. This chapter therefore gives a brief overview of both the country's and the diaspora's history. I do not here intend to reiterate in detail the rich body of literature on the recent history of Eritrea (for such see, for instance, Bernal 2004; Connell 1997; Hepner 2009; Human Rights Watch 1991; Iyob 1995; Negash and Tronvoll 2001; Pool 2001). Instead, I focus on particular developments and occurrences crucial to flight from Eritrea that help to provide a comprehensive picture of the Eritrean diaspora. The reader needs this background to understand the research project's explanations, descriptions, and interpretations in the right context.

2.1 Two migration periods – two generations of Eritrean refugees

The Eritrean diaspora was established in the 1960s and has witnessed an increase in the past decade. Emigration from Eritrea can be broadly divided into two main periods: first, the period of the Eritrean struggle for independence between 1961 and 1991 and second, from 2001 until today (see Glatthard 2012; Hepner 2015[2009]; Hirt 2015a).

Eritrea as a separate territorial entity dates back to Italian colonialisation in the second half of the 19th century (for historical overview see Figure 1). Prior to this, "the territory known as Eritrea had been linked in varying degrees to the Ethiopian empire" (Hoyle 1999: 382). After Italy's defeat and the end of World War II, Eritrea was placed temporarily under British military administration. In 1952, the United Nations (UN) decided to federate Eritrea with its neighbour Ethiopia that ended with the unlawful annexation into the Ethiopian empire and the outbreak of the struggle for independence in 1961. This 30-year struggle for national liberation from Ethiopia was the basic cause of the first generation of refugees from Eritrea on a large scale. In addition to the struggle for independence, the Eritrean people witnessed a violent civil war between two rival Eritrean liberation movements, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which ended with the defeat of the ELF in 1981. Furthermore, the socio-economic and ecological conditions deteriorated during this period (Conrad 2005: 219–221; Hepner 2003: 272–274; Sorenson 1991: 302–306). Thus, the period from 1961 to 1991 constituted three decades of violent "armed conflict, political turmoil, and cyclical drought and famine" (Hepner 2015[2009]: 185)

in which hundreds of thousands of Eritreans lost their lives, and even more found themselves forced to leave Eritrea and settle in exile. There are no accurate data either on the number of Eritrean refugees or on the total Eritrean population during this period. Nevertheless, it is estimated that approximately one million Eritreans, or every third to fourth Eritrean, had fled Eritrea by 1991. Although the vast majority settled in the neighbouring country of Sudan, Eritrean diasporas also formed in the Middle East, Europe, Australia, and North America (Bernal 2017: 4–5; Connell and Killion 2011: 444; Hepner 2015[2009]: 203, 2008: 176–177; Schmitz-Pranghe 2010: 5). Although in exile, Eritreans of this first migration generation generally maintained strong transnational relations with their origin. In particular, those who supported the EPLF contributed financially, ideologically, and organizationally to the armed struggle at home (Bernal 2000; Conrad 2006a; Hepner 2009; Schmitz-Pranghe 2010). In addition, the EPLF actively created and promoted the link between Eritrea and its diaspora to mobilise the exile community for the Eritrean case (see Al-ali et al. 2001; Koser 2003a; Radtke 2009). Thus, scholars studying the Eritrean diaspora agree that the Eritrean refugees of this first migration generation in general have developed strong ideological and emotional ties towards their home country (Conrad 2010: 20; Hepner and Tecle 2013: 391; Hirt 2013: 12–13). They also refer to 'long-distance nationalism' (see Anderson 1992; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001) to emphasise the strong national consciousness that exists amongst the Eritrean diaspora (see Chapter 2.2).

The 30-year struggle for independence ended with the defeat of the Ethiopian rulers in 1991, and Eritrea was internationally recognised as a sovereign and independent nation state in 1993. Only five years later, a new violent and devastating conflict emerged about the common border between the two countries (see Gray 2006; Negash and Tronvoll 2001). This 1998–2000 Eritrean-Ethiopian border war and its consequences, which are still felt today, constitute the reasons for the second period of emigration from Eritrea. Despite the end of the war in 2000 and the demarcation of the borders (see Eritrea – Ethiopia Boundary Commission 2002), Eritrea today still finds itself in a state of no-war-no-peace, because Ethiopia fails to adhere to the demarcation decision (Müller 2012: 797). In the aftermath of the border war, criticism of the Eritrean government, its strategies, and its authoritarian tendencies emerged in 2001. As a reaction, the Eritrean regime took repressive measures; it imprisoned government reformers, journalists, students, and other dissidents and cracked down on the independent press (Connell 2011: 423; Hepner 2007: 3; Tecle 2012: 54). Furthermore, the enactment of democratic reforms that had been postponed at the outbreak of the 1998–2000 border dispute, such as the implementation of a constitution and democratic elections, remained suspended. Hence, the former liberation front EPLF, later renamed the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), and its leader Isaias Afewerki

has gained absolute state power and rule the country today as a one-party state[2]. Due to the continuing no-war-no-peace situation, the Eritrean regime has not demobilised its soldiers but introduced new rules and continued to recruit the Eritrean youth into national service (see Bozzini 2011a; Kibreab 2013). Although initially designated a mandatory service of eighteen months for both Eritrean men and women, it has been extended for an unspecified period of time and become indefinite in length. Conscripts generally receive only low wages and sometimes also have to work in state-owned businesses. People who try to evade national service are said to fear severe and inhuman punishments. In view of these conditions, some authors describe national service as "forced labour" (Bozzini 2011b: 96–98; Hirt 2013: 5–8; Kibreab 2009: 49–60; Riggan 2013: 754–755; Weldehaimanot 2011: 5). Hence, the 1998–2000 Eritrean-Ethiopian border war "sparked the human rights crisis in Eritrea which to this day continues to drive a new generation of Eritreans to seek sanctuary in the diaspora" (Arnone 2011: 448). As a result of these developments, Eritreans today flee their country in increasing numbers. Again, there are no accurate numbers. It is reckoned that in 2012 up to three or four thousand Eritreans left their country every month (Hepner and Tecle 2013: 381; United Nations Human Rights Council 2013: 17). An international organisation that operates in Eritrea estimates the emigration from Eritrea in 2015 at two thousand per month, while the Eritrean foreign minister has stated that the number of Eritreans leaving the country in 2016 was around one thousand per month (Stauffer 2017: 206). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) registered 35,500 Eritrean refugees in 2015 and recorded a total of about 411,300 Eritrean refugees by the end of 2015 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2016: 17).[3] As a consequence, Eritrea today ranks amongst the major source countries of refugees, both in absolute numbers and in proportion to its population[4].

[2] In its national charter, the PFDJ defines itself explicitly as a front or a broad-based movement and not a party (Bernal 2001: 153; EPLF/PFDJ 1994). However, scholars often refer to it as Eritrea's only political party, which governs Eritrea as a one-party state (see Hepner and Tecle 2013; Müller 2012; Schmitz-Pranghe 2010).

[3] Some people call the number of Eritrean refugees into question. In a personal discussion with me at the International Conference on Eritrean Studies (ICES) in Asmara, an elderly Eritrean living in the diaspora claimed that a large number of asylum seekers who today are officially registered as Eritreans were in fact Ethiopians. He stressed that Austria, for instance, estimates that 40 per cent were actually of Ethiopian origin (see also TesfaNews 2015). According to him, the reason for this is that Europe grants asylum to Eritreans very extensively unlike for other nationalities. This assumption, however, is difficult if not virtually impossible to examine.

[4] Only estimates of Eritrea's total population are available, as no official census has been taken. The estimated population numbers then vary from about 3.5 million up to more than 6 million Eritreans (Schmitz-Pranghe 2010: 5; Swiss Federal Administrative Court 2017b: 21). In a press conference on the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry in mid-2016, Yemane Gebreab, Head of Political Affairs and Presidential Adviser, stated that Eritrea today has a population of less than 4 million (Miles 2016).

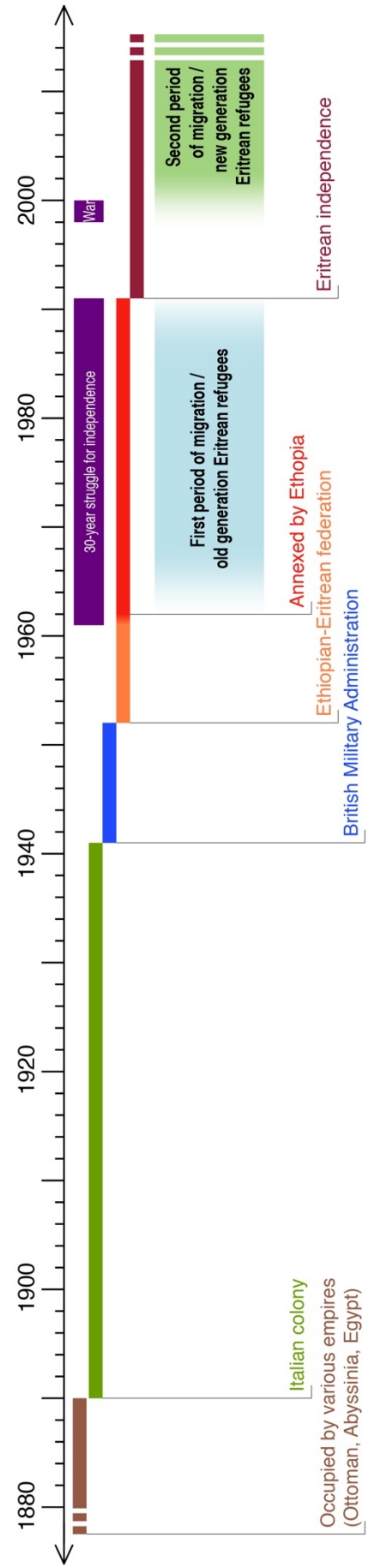


Figure 1: Eritrean historical timeline

Source: Own representation, based on Connell and Killion (2011: 4–17)

In sum, the Eritrean diaspora consists of Eritrean individuals of two different periods of emigration and thus of two generations of refugees, and their reasons for leaving Eritrea differ substantially. The first or old generation Eritrean refugees escaped from the struggle for independence from Ethiopia and the civil war between 1961 and 1991. However, the new generation of Eritrean refugees has fled since the turn of the millennium due to the "intensified political repression and militarization" (Tecle and Goldring 2013: 194) of the authoritarian Eritrean regime.

To distinguish the two generations, Hepner (2015[2009]) introduced the terms 'generation nationalism' for the Eritreans of the first period of emigration and 'generation asylum' for those of the second period of emigration. In my view, however, this typology is ambiguous. For one thing, the terms address different categories; nationalism refers to ideologies or values, while asylum is rather a legal concept. Further, this terminology disregards the fact that Eritreans of the first generation generally arrived as asylum seekers too. Additionally, it might also be simplistic to equate a particular refugee generation with nationalist sentiments or political attitudes towards the current Eritrean government; nonetheless, this is exactly the linkage that often seems to be drawn. In the course of this research, I have realised that Eritreans of the first migration generation are generally understood to be long-distant nationalists supporting the government, while Eritreans of the more recent migration generation are regarded as opponents and government critics, because they deserted the independent Eritrea. However, the reality is rather more complex than this (see also Chapter 2.3.2). As a consequence, I refrain from using the terms 'generation nationalism' and 'generation asylum' and name the two distinct groups the first or old generation and the new generation of Eritrean refugees.

2.2 Eritrean national identity and the Eritrean second generation

Eritreans seem to exhibit a strong sense of Eritrean national identity and national consciousness, despite the multiplicity of ethnic groups, religious affiliations, classes, and other diversities within Eritrea and Eritrean society (for the development of Eritrean identity and nationalism see for instance Abbay 1998; Gruber 2001; Hepner 2008; Hoyle 1999; Riggan 2016; Sorenson 1991; Tronvoll 1999, 2009a). Although the first notions of Eritrean identity developed in the Italian colonial era of 1890–1947 (Conrad 2005: 220), scholars generally agree that the dominant narrative of Eritrean national identity begins with the Eritrean struggle for independence against Ethiopia of 1961–1991 (see Chapter 2.1). In the course of the long struggle for independence, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front EPLF unified the ethnic and religious groups into one Eritrean nation and thus established a common Eritrean identity and sense of nation (Conrad 2010: 194–196; Tronvoll 2009b: 114–117; Zerat 2009: 20–25). This sense of nation developed not only in the local Eritrean community but also in the Eritrean diaspora. Eritrean nationalism and identity developed organically and was actively promoted and instilled in the Eritrean exile community (Dorman 2005: 210). The exile

community engaged actively in the liberation struggle and contributed in the nation-building project both financially and ideologically. In addition, the liberation front established transnational structures to spread its nationalist ideology and mobilise the Eritrean diaspora (see for instance Al-ali et al. 2001; Bereketeab 2007; Bernal 2004; Conrad 2003, 2010; Hepner 2008; Koser 2003a, 2003b; Radtke 2009; Schmitz-Pranghe 2010). Thus, the Eritrean diaspora is both "an outgrowth of the nationalism struggle and at same time a contributing factor to the survival of Eritrean nationalism" (Bernal 2004: 9). As a result of the formation of such a sense of nationality and identity abroad, scholars observe, the Eritrean diaspora at that time was characterised by a strong 'long-distance nationalism' (see Conrad 2010; Koser 2003b). After independence, feelings of nationalism and a common Eritrean national identity within the Eritrean exile community generally remained. The outbreak of the 1998–2000 border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia (see Negash and Tronvoll 2001) entailed a further rise of Eritrean nationalism amongst the diaspora. However, it also evoked a more critical engagement with the Eritrean nationalist project, especially amongst the youth (Conrad 2003: 181–182; Müller 2012: 779). In the years after the 1998–2000 border war, alternative debates and narratives on Eritrean citizenship and nationalism emerged, also in which use of the Internet played a central role (see for instance Bernal 2005, 2006, 2014, 2017; Conrad 2006c; Dorman 2005; Hepner 2003, 2007). Thus, post-independence developments have sparked new debates about Eritrean nationalism, citizenship, and identity. Consequently, questions about Eritrean national identity today remain an important and pervasive issue for diaspora Eritreans.

The term 'second generation' refers to children of migrant parents who are born and grow up in a country different from their parents' origin (King and Christou 2010: 106) (see also Chapter 4.1.2). Thus, studies on the second generation often address questions of home, belonging, and identity in relation to both the country of residence and the ancestral home country (see Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002; Levitt and Waters 2002; Mavroudi 2007; Rumbaut 2002; Smith 2002; Somerville 2008; Waters 1994), examine the involvement and transnational engagement of the second generation with their ancestral home country (see Hess and Korf 2014; Kasinitz et al. 2002; King and Christou 2011), or focus on their integration and assimilation within their country of residence (Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Alejandro Portes and Zhou 1993). However, these different foci should not be considered as separate topics but as closely related and intertwined (see Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Generally speaking, second-generation studies "focus on how members of the second and subsequent generation negotiate their 'in between' positions and multiple identities" (Lee 2008: 10).

As with general literature on second generations, studies on second-generation Eritreans often focus on the identity formation of Eritrean diaspora youth and reveal how second-generation Eritreans constitute their identity in the diaspora. Several scholars have stressed that individuals of the second generation generally develop an Eritrean consciousness, because they have grown up in contexts in which parents have

maintained strong relations to Eritrea and other Eritreans (Conrad 2010; Hirt 2015b; Zerat 2009). Blood and kinship constitute the foundation of their Eritrean identity, while their Eritrean identity is manifested and performed through skills, most importantly knowing the language, cultural knowledge, and awareness of Eritrean traditions. Because second-generation Eritreans generally have rather limited direct contact with Eritrea, they learn about Eritrean culture and identity primarily from their parents and other Eritrean community members (Zerat 2009: 67). In additional, Eritrean exile organisations and the Eritrean leadership are involved in reinforcing and promoting narratives about Eritrean culture, identity, and nationalism and thus contribute to transmitting Eritrean national identity to Eritrean diaspora youth (Arnone 2010: 165; Bernal 2013: 248; Conrad 2006a: 6–11, 2010: 80; Hirt 2015a: 26; Tecle 2012: 63–70; Zerat 2009: 67). Hence, besides organised or individual journeys to Eritrea (see Conrad 2006a, 2010; Graf 2017; Tecle 2012), second-generation Eritreans mainly learn about Eritrean culture and identity in the diaspora. Nevertheless, second-generation Eritreans normally do not fully adapt to either Eritrean culture or the culture of the country of residence, since they normally do not feel full members of either group (Zerat 2009: 62).

In sum, Eritreans in the diaspora have developed and seem to maintain their Eritrean identity and belonging, which constitutes an important and profound theme for the second generation too. However, the effects of current national and international developments on the process of negotiating Eritrean identity and a sense of belonging among second-generation Eritreans remain open issues.

2.3 Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland

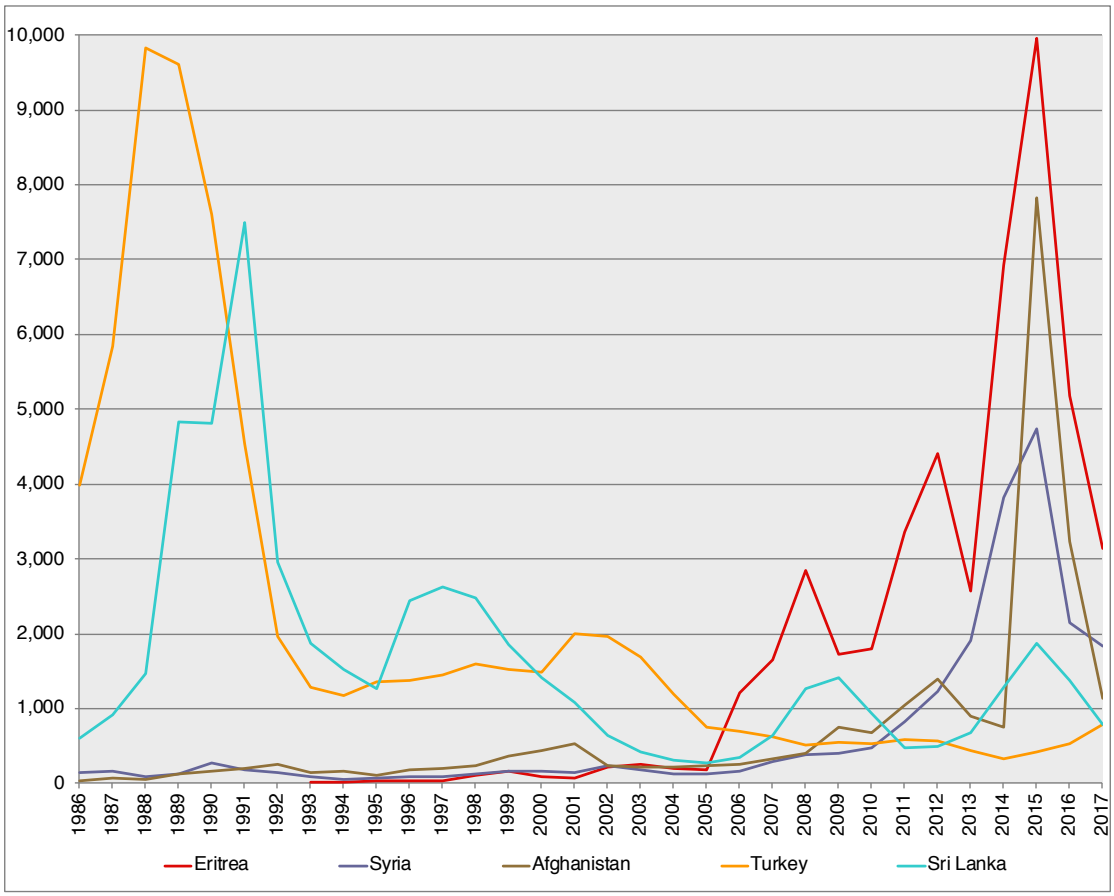
For a long time, Switzerland played only a marginal role for Eritreans migrating and seeking asylum. During the struggle for independence, Eritreans mainly fled to the neighbouring country of Sudan or to countries in the global north such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Canada, and the United States (Schmitz-Pranghe 2010: 5). However, no precise data exist on the actual size of the early Eritrean diaspora, for either these countries or Switzerland. The main reason for this is that Eritrea is a young nation-state. As a result, Eritrean immigrants were registered as Ethiopian nationals prior to *de jure* Eritrean independence in 1993. Within Europe, the largest Eritrean community at that time was to be found in Germany. The voting results for the 1993 Eritrean referendum for independence indicate that about 7,000 Eritreans were resident in Germany at that time. However, Schröder estimates the size of the old generation Eritrean community in Germany at 16,000 (Koser 2003b: 112; Radtke 2009: 147).

In comparison, the numbers of old generation Eritrean refugees in Switzerland was relatively small. As in other countries, however, Eritrean nationals also appear in official Swiss statistics only after 1993 (Eyer and Schweizer 2010: 35–36). Swiss Census data from 1990 reveal that roughly 1,500 Ethiopians were then resident in Switzerland (Swiss Federal Statistical Office 2015). The Swiss State Secretariat for

Migration (SEM), formerly known as the Federal Office for Migration (FOM), estimated that more than 30 per cent of these officially registered Ethiopian nationals were in fact of Eritrean origin (Eyer and Schweizer 2010: 36). However, the Honorary Consul of Eritrea in Switzerland, who has been familiar with the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland for decades, estimates the number of Eritrean residents in Switzerland by the end of the 1980s at approximately 1,000 to 1,200, predominantly settled in the French-speaking western part of Switzerland (Interview 2014).

After the turn of the millennium, the role of Switzerland as a country of destination for Eritrean asylum seekers changed fundamentally. Today, Switzerland constitutes one of the prime recipient countries of Eritrean refugees in the global north. At the same time, Eritrea also presents the prime country of origin of asylum seekers in Switzerland, and has done so for several years (see Figure 2) (State Secretariat for Migration 2015a: 3, 2016a: 3, 2017: 3; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2012: 25–27).

Figure 2: Asylum applications in Switzerland 1986–2017: Top five countries of origin



Source: Own representation, based on State Secretariat for Migration (2018)

Since the mid-2000s, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland has grown substantially. Furthermore, it has witnessed two remarkable increases in the number of Eritrean asylum applications, the first in 2006. As in Switzerland, the numbers of Eritrean asylum applications have been rising in Norway, Sweden, and Great Britain as a consequence of the declining political and socio-economic situation in Eritrea (Eyer and Schweizer 2010: 37). Yet, this development seems to be particularly pronounced

in Switzerland. The reasons are twofold: First, it is due to Switzerland's geographical proximity to Italy. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has indicated that Eritreans are one of the largest groups of refugees among those who come to Europe across the Mediterranean. Since Israel completed a fence along parts of its borders with Egypt in 2013 to curb illegal immigration, the central Mediterranean route to Lampedusa appears to have become the prime way for Eritreans to Europe. From Italy, the majority then tries to move on to Central and North Europe. There they seek to apply for asylum, regardless of the Dublin Regulation, which should prevent this (Siegfried 2013; State Secretariat for Migration 2015a: 3; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2014a). Secondly, and more importantly, the 2006 increase of Eritrean asylum applicants in Switzerland is a consequence of a change in the practice of the Swiss asylum board with Eritrean asylum applications (see Chapter 2.3.1). This policy change also accounts for the following growth of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland (Eyer & Schweizer 2010: 37/41).

The second remarkable increase in Eritrean asylum applications in Switzerland took place in 2014 (see Figure 2). The numbers of Eritrean applicants rose from roughly 2,500 in 2013 to almost 7,000 in 2014. This is related to general developments in South Italy, where approximately 170,000 people arrived by boat in 2014, roughly four times as many as in the previous year. The main nationalities amongst these arrivals were Syrian (42,300) and Eritrean (34,300)[5], most of whom arrived with the intention of continuing northwards. After Germany and Sweden, Switzerland received the third largest total of asylum applicants from Eritrea. In 2015, the numbers of Eritrean asylum applications in Switzerland even have exceeded the record high from the previous year. At the end of 2015, a total of 9,966 new Eritrean asylum seekers had been registered in Switzerland (State Secretariat for Migration 2015a: 3, 2016a: 3). However, 2015 seems to have been an exceptional year for asylum seekers in general. In 2016, the numbers of Eritrean applicants in Switzerland declined to 5,178. However, this still represents the largest national group of asylum seekers in Switzerland (State Secretariat for Migration 2017: 3).

Hence, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland has witnessed a substantial change during the last decade. It has developed from a relatively small community that was scarcely noticed to one of the most prominent communities of asylum seekers in Switzerland today. Admittedly, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland still remains rather small, with a total of about 33,000 residents in 2016, compared to the largest foreign national communities in Switzerland, the Italian (316,500), the German (303,500), and the Portuguese (268,700). However, it currently represents the largest national group

[5] Following my presentation at the International Conference on Eritrean Studies (ICES) in Asmara, two Eritreans told me that these data are wrong. They suggested that I should refer to Eurostat data and claimed that these would show markedly lower numbers, with a difference of several thousand Eritreans fewer. Yet, according to the Eurostat figures I have found, roughly more than 47,000 Eritreans registered in the EU-28 Member States and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland in 2015 (eurostat 2016).

of non-European residents in Switzerland, followed by the Sri Lankan (28,600) and the Brazilian (20,200) (Swiss Federal Statistical Office 2017a).

2.3.1 Swiss asylum policy on Eritrean asylum seekers

The first Eritrean refugees in Switzerland were students applying for asylum on completing their studies, as they feared repression by the Ethiopian regime, and later Eritreans who fled the struggle for independence and the civil war (Eyer and Schweizer 2010: 36–37). According to the Honorary Consul of Eritrea in Switzerland, the majority of this first generation of Eritrean refugees were individuals with higher education and urban backgrounds (Interview 2014). However, little is known about Swiss asylum policy toward these Eritrean refugees before the turn of the century.

> At that time, it has been a long process and it was more difficult to get granted asylum than it is for Eritreans today. However, it was not that much of a controversy. The decision-making authorities knew of the war situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the existence of the independence movement. Therefore, Eritreans were granted asylum. Well… there certainly were no deportations. The asylum procedure just was not that fast and easy as it is today. So, they simply went through every stage [of the asylum process] to get granted asylum. (Honorary Consul of Eritrea in Switzerland, interview 2014)

Similarly, various interviewees assumed that applying for asylum seemed to be less contentious for their parents' generation than it is today as a result of the considerably lower number of early arrivals and the political and economic situation in Switzerland, which they perceived to be easier for asylum seekers in general by then. However, various amendments over the past decade have affected Swiss asylum policy towards Eritrean asylum seekers and crucially changed the conditions for Eritrean asylum seekers.

In 2006, a judgment of the supreme judicial authority responsible for asylum matters had a decisive influence on the design of subsequent Swiss asylum policy and practice towards Eritrean asylum seekers. This is also clearly visible in the 2006 increase of Eritrean asylum applications in Switzerland, as mentioned above (see Figure 2). At that time, the Swiss Asylum Appeals Commission *(Schweizerische Asylrekurskommission)*[6] announced the ground-breaking verdict EMARK 2006/3. Basing its judgement on the assessment of the European Court of Justice, the commission considers the punishment for conscientious objection and/or desertion in Eritrea as disproportionate, unreasonably high, and politically motivated. The commission considers the fear of such a punishment to be well founded if the asylum

[6] Due to reforms of the federal justice system, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court replaced the Swiss Asylum Appeals Commission (Schweizerische Asylrekurskommission 2007).

seeker has been in direct contact with the military authorities. Such contact is taken for granted when the asylum applicant was on active service or fled from imminent recruitment (Schweizerische Asylrekurskommission 2006: 35–39). Consequently, every Eritrean who is able to prove that he or she was in contact with the military authorities and thus fears serious punishment as a result of desertion fulfils the requirements for refugee status and is to be granted political asylum in Switzerland (Schweizerische Asylrekurskommission 2006: 29). This decision then defined future practice with Eritrean asylum seekers. As a result, the situation for Eritrean asylum seekers changed vastly, and the asylum acceptance rate *(Anerkennungsquote)* increased from 6.1 per cent in 2005 to 82.6 per cent in 2006. At that time, the chances for Eritreans of being granted asylum and receiving residence permits as recognised refugees (permit B) better than for any other group of asylum seekers in Switzerland (Eyer & Schweizer 2010: 41; Glatthard 2012: 48; Haefliger 2007).

In subsequent years, the handling and timely assessment of an increasing number of incoming and pending asylum applications posed a challenge to the State Secretariat for Migration (*Staatssekretariat für Migration* SEM). Therefore, it decided to set priorities for the handling of certain asylum applications while postponing others. It postponed the handling of claims that would be assigned positively which included, amongst other nationalities, applications from Eritreans. The aim of this new priorities was to reduce the attractiveness of Switzerland to refugees, including those from Eritrea (Federal Department of Justice and Police 2011: 14–15). As a result of this strategy, the number of pending Eritrean asylum applications increased.

In August 2011, an internal document of the SEM was leaked to the press, which revealed a shift in asylum policy towards Eritreans. To cope with the increasing number of pending Eritrean applications, the SEM decided to temporarily suspend the mandatory federal hearing *(Bundesanhörung)*[7] for undoubtedly persecuted Eritreans. Hence, those who were able to prove both their Eritrean origin and their fear of persecution due to desertion, objection to military service, or kin liability *(Reflexverfolgung)*[8] underwent a simplified procedure. This accelerated procedure was designed to facilitate the integration into Swiss society of those permitted to stay (Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen 2011). A legal advisor for asylum seekers, who was not familiar with this temporary practice, remembered having seeing rather short asylum decision of the SEM's during that period, which might be an evidence of the existence of such a policy towards Eritrean asylum seekers (conversation note 2013). However, as a result of prompt criticism, this practice was soon discontinued.

[7] At that time, the Swiss asylum procedure involved two interviews. First, a brief hearing took place at the Federal Reception and Processing Centre, where asylum seekers had to file their applications. In this, the applicants are asked only basic questions about their person and their asylum claims. Second, the SEM conducted a more in-depth federal hearing, the *Bundesanhörung*, on which the SEM officials determined the asylum decision (Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe n.d.).

[8] Kin liability exists when certain actions bring threats and dangers for family members and relatives (Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe 2009).

In autumn 2012, the Swiss legislature then implemented an urgent modification of the Asylum Act *(Dringliche Änderungen des Asylgesetzes)*, which was approved by a Swiss referendum in June 2013. One of the central arguments of this revision was that conscientious objection per se *(Militärdienstverweigerung)* does not present a valid reason for asylum. Through this argument, the legislature intended to specifically react to the large number of Eritrean asylum applicants. However, even before this, conscientious objection had only been recognised as grounds for granting asylum if it involved or was accompanied by a well-founded fear of persecution. Thus, Eritreans who are persecuted or fear punishment due to conscientious objection will still be granted asylum in Switzerland (Federal Department of Justice and Police 2013; Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen 2013). Hence, the actual effect of the 2012 Asylum Act revision on the number and handling of Eritrean asylum applications remained unclear. Although Switzerland witnessed a short-term decline in asylum applications from Eritrean nationals in 2013 (see Figure 2), the numbers increased again in subsequent years. The 2013 decline thus may be interpreted as an effect of the abolition of the possibility to apply for asylum at Swiss embassies, another element of the revision of the Asylum Act.

In summer 2016, the SEM introduced a further change of practice to Eritrean applications. As a consequence of its assessment of the situation in Eritrea, it evaluated punishments for desertion and for leaving Eritrea illegally as less disproportionate than before (see State Secretariat for Migration 2016b). As a result, the Swiss asylum authority tightened up its practice with Eritrean asylum seekers; it denied asylum to Eritreans who had never been drafted, had been freed or released from national service, or had left the country illegally (Federal Department of Justice and Police 2016; Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe 2016a). In early 2017, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court then released a new leading decision (D-7898/2015) confirming this change in the practice of the SEM. The decision states that illegal exit from Eritrea no longer entails asylum-relevant persecution and therefore no longer constitutes a valid reason for asylum (Swiss Federal Administrative Court 2017a). Furthermore, an additional precedent from mid-2017 (D-2311/2016) considers return to Eritrea to be not generally unreasonable and inadmissible, as it does not always involve inhuman punishments or violation of human rights (Swiss Federal Administrative Court 2017b). Hence, in addition to the increasing rejection of Eritrean asylum applications, the Swiss asylum authority now assesses return to Eritrea in general as reasonable.

After all these adjustments and changes to Swiss asylum practice with Eritrean asylum applications during the past decade, the rate for granting asylum (*Anerkennungsquote*) for Eritreans was at 42.4 per cent at the end of 2016. The

protection rate *(Schutzquote)*[9], which also includes the temporarily admitted Eritreans, was at 76.6 per cent (State Secretariat for Migration 2017: 17). These rates still present rather high quotas in comparison with those for other countries of origin. However, compared to rates of Eritrean asylum applications in other European counties, they seem not to be exceptional, as is indicated, for instance, by the 92.2 per cent protection rate in Germany in 2016 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2017: 2).

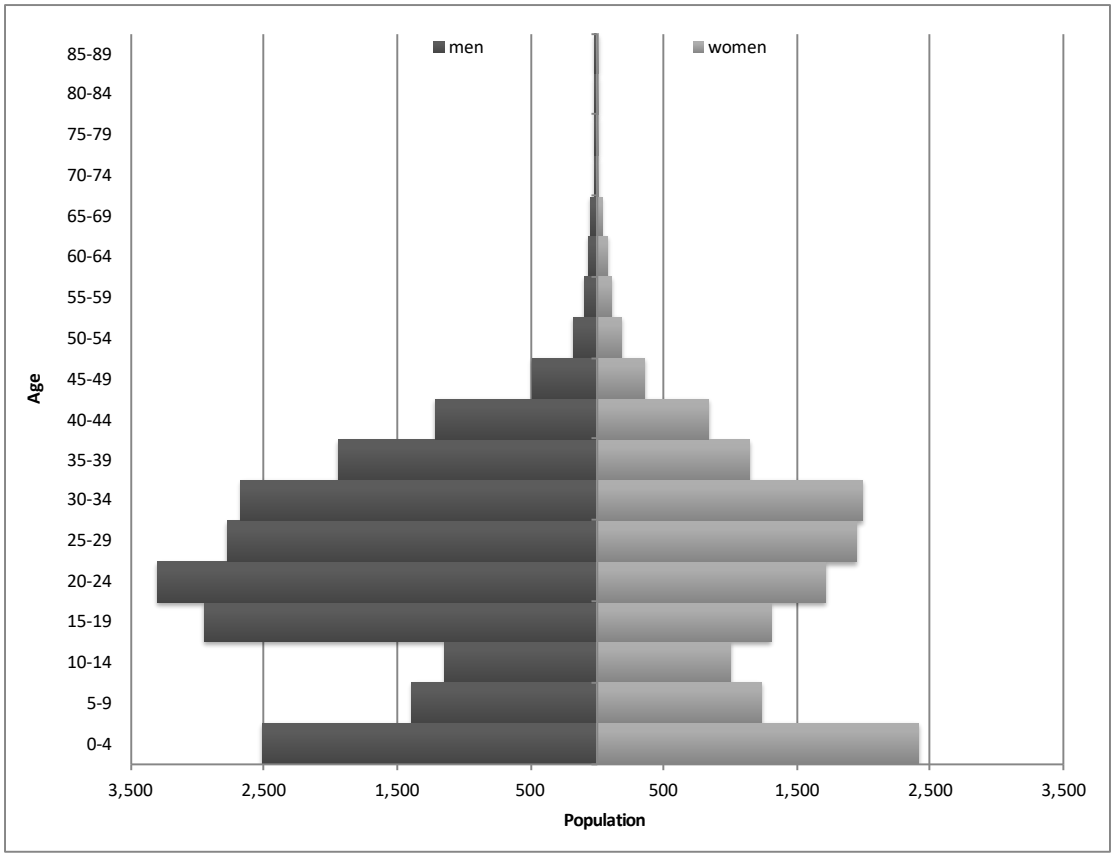
2.3.2 Structure and characteristics of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland

The literature on the Eritrean diaspora emphasises its great heterogeneity and fragmentation (see Conrad 2005; Hepner 2008, 2009; Koser and Fauvelle-Aymar 2002). Similarly, studies on the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland have shown significant diversity within the Eritrean community in, for example, ethnicity, place or region of origin, and religion (see Bühler 2012; Burkhardt and Lanfranchi 2016; Eyer and Schweizer 2010; Glatthard 2012; Widmer and Schmutz 2013). The majority of Eritreans in Switzerland, however, is of ethnic Tigrinya origin and belongs to the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church[10] (Bühler 2012: 66; Eyer and Schweizer 2010: 2010; Glatthard 2012: 60). Viewed demographically, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland is a rather young population; around 80 per cent are younger than 35 years, and 25 per cent are even below the age of 15 (see Figure 3).

[9] The protection rate *(Schutzquote)* comprises the number of individuals granted asylum (permit B) plus the number of individuals temporarily admitted stay in Switzerland (permit F) in relation to the total number of all decisions (granting asylum, refusal, or dismissal of the application). The recognition rate *(Anerkennungsquote)* only comprises the share of individuals granted asylum (State Secretariat for Migration 2016a: 8).

[10] Four religions are officially recognised by the Eritrean state: Eritrean Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant Lutheran, and Islam; 50 per cent of the population is said to be Christians and 50 per cent Muslims. Besides Eritrean Orthodox, there are also Catholic, Protestant and a few Pentecostal and Muslim Eritreans in Switzerland. The under-representation of Eritrean Muslims in Switzerland can be explained through the fact that Eritrean Muslims in general migrate to Arabic countries, while Christians prefer to go to North America and Europe (Bühler 2012: 66).

Figure 3: Population pyramid of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland (December 2016)



Source: Own representation, based on Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2017b)

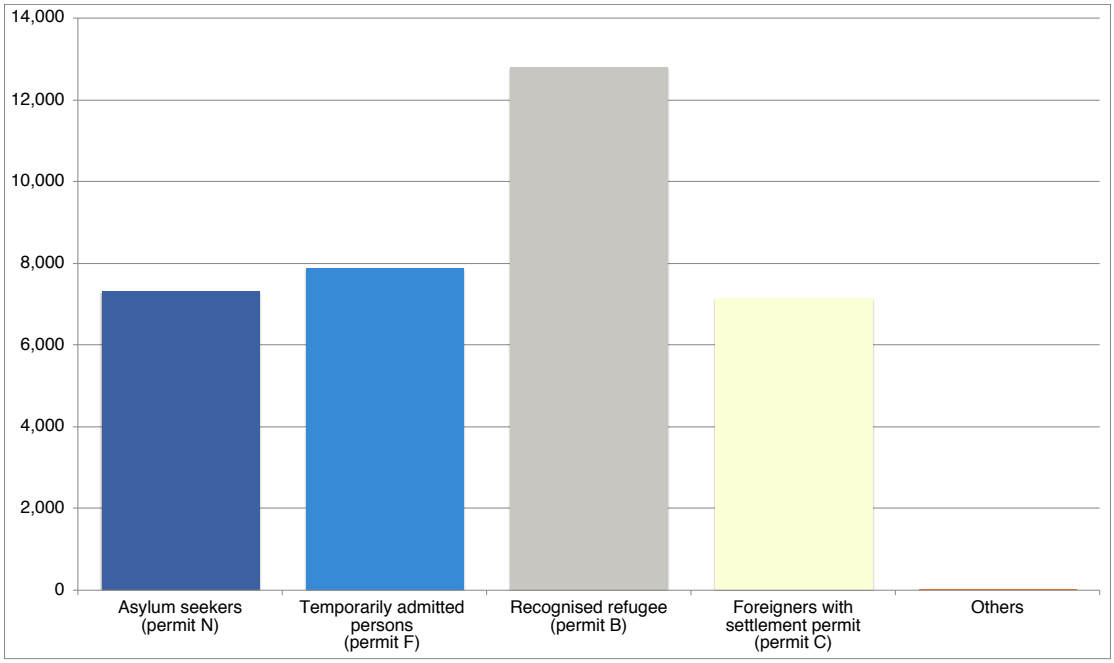
The demographic structure of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland also includes a surplus of Eritrean men aged between 15 and 40. Such trends in age and gender patterns are rather common amongst asylum-seeker communities, since young men tend to be more confident about travelling and settling abroad (Connor 2016: 23; State Secretariat for Migration 2014)). In addition, the Eritrean community in Switzerland also has a rather large share of children, most of whom have been born in Switzerland (Burkhardt and Lanfranchi 2016: 20).

In this section, I focus on two important specific characteristics of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland: first, the legal statuses of Eritreans in Switzerland, which make the Eritrean community a special case amongst asylum seeker communities; second, the fragmentation within the diaspora due to different political attitudes. This fragmentation is not specific to the Swiss Eritrean diaspora, but it appears to be rather pronounced in Switzerland.

Legal statuses of Eritreans in Switzerland

By the end of 2016, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office had registered 35,162 Eritrean nationals holding different types of legal residence status in Switzerland (see Figure 4). It is important to note that these numbers include Eritreans of both migration periods. However, Eritreans who were naturalised in Switzerland are no longer included in this figure. As the application for naturalisation is only possible after a residency of more than twelve years (State Secretariat for Migration 2012), these are mainly Eritreans of the first migration period. The same is true for their children, the second generation. They may still hold the same permits for foreign nationals as their parents, or they may have acquired Swiss citizenship, either in consequence of the naturalisation of their parents or their own application for naturalisation.

Figure 4: Eritreans in Switzerland by type of residence status (December 2016)



Source: Own representation, based on Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2017b)

Due to Swiss asylum practice with Eritrean asylum seekers (see Chapter 2.3.1), the Eritrean diaspora possesses rather special legal statuses compared to other asylum seeker communities. The Eritrean diaspora consists of a relatively large share of individuals holding residence permissions as refugees (permit B) and fewer temporarily admitted persons (permit F). Furthermore, an additional large group even holds settlement permits (permit C). This may be understood as a status that follows permit B; it is granted under certain conditions, usually after residency of ten years.

The reasons for these different statuses are important to note, because they entail different rights and constraints, for instance regarding residence, housing, work permits, and integration measures. In comparison to permit F, permit B contains fewer restrictions for individuals and thus should facilitate their integration (Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe 2016b). Nevertheless, media coverage in recent years indicates that Eritreans seem to struggle with both social and economic integration (see Alabor 2017;

Baumgartner 2014; Kantonale Fachstelle für Integrationsfragen Zürich 2015; Loser 2015; Scheurer 2015; Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen 2017; Wacker 2014). However, this portrayal of Eritreans as unintegrated is a broad generalization about a very heterogeneous group of people that needs to be put into perspective. As I have learned through this research project, this media coverage mainly refers to the new generation of Eritrean refugees and generally fails to consider the older generation. More reflective reports about Eritreans in Switzerland (see Alabor 2017; Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen 2016, 2017) and my own encounters with individuals of the new generation who have learned German and quickly found employment show a more detailed picture. In any case, a lack of economic integration, reflected in a rather high proportion of welfare recipients, is not unusual for asylum-seeker communities during their first decade of residence (Widmer and Schmutz 2013: 2).

Diaspora fragmentation due to political orientation

Since the repressive policies of the Eritrean government grew in 2001 (see Chapter 2.1), "the diaspora has become both politically polarised and fragmented" (Conrad 2010: 25). In Switzerland, this division is clearly observable and affects many spheres of the daily lives of Eritreans. For instance, it has caused a split in the Eritrean Orthodox Church in Zurich (Bühler 2012: 89–101), has erupted into violent clashes amongst members of the Eritrean diaspora (Schoop and Baumgartner 2013; Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen 2012), and has provoked an environment of scepticism, suspicion, and distrust within the Eritrean community (see Glatthard 2012).

Very generally, the Eritrean diaspora consists of three groups: government supporters, government critics and opponents of the regime, and a silent majority who prefer to refrain from voicing their opinion in public and who stress their lack of a political opinion. However, the political fragmentation of the Eritrean diaspora is rather more complex than this initial division indicates. The three groups are all internally divided. This is even true for the silent majority, who are divided between passive supporters and opponents of the government (Hirt 2015b: 128). The fact that such a distinction is made even in the case of the silent majority indicates that a withdrawal from politics seems scarcely possible, and that people often allocate each other to one or other political camp. Political attitudes towards the Eritrean leadership are also often perceived to be interrelated with various other factors, such as ethnicity, region of origin, and the support of one of the two rival liberation fronts ELF and EPLF (see for instance Conrad 2010: 162–163; Glatthard 2012: 48–61; Hirt 2015b: 128–135). Similarly, I have discerned in this study that migrating within a certain period may lead to assumptions and ascriptions of a particular political stance towards the Eritrean government by others (see also Chapter 2.1).

Eritreans in Switzerland tend to ascribe particular political attitudes to individuals according to their generation of migration. In general, the old generation of migration and their children tend to be identified as nationalists or loyal government supporters, because they have often supported the liberation struggle and the EPLF and still support

Eritrea today through remittances, investments in Eritrea, or paying a controversial two per cent diaspora tax[11]. Because such monetary flows from the diaspora constitute a crucial source of income for the government (see Hepner 2009: 24), the new Eritrean refugees who flee from the current Eritrean state blame the old migration generation for contributing to the persistence of the current situation in Eritrea. In contrast, the new arrivals from Eritrea are generally perceived to be disloyal opponents, as they have fled from the current regime (Glatthard 2012: 54; Hepner 2015[2009]; 187–188). Bereketeab states that "their political commitment and engagement in the diaspora politics of Eritrea seems to be, unlike their predecessors very tenuous and lack their passionate engagement" (Bereketeab 2007: 81) as they were children when the country became independent and thus lack of concrete experiences of the struggle for independency.

However, the generation of arrival cannot be simply equated with political attitudes towards the Eritrean state, and the reality is more complex. For instance, a substantial proportion of the old generation oppose the Eritrean government (see Bereketeab 2007: 80–86; Conrad 2006b: 252). Likewise, the new generation of Eritrean refugees does not necessarily have a negative stance towards the government. My interviews confirmed that drawing such a direct link between periods of migration and political attitudes is too simple. Nevertheless, I also experienced the existence of such categorization patterns in the course of my research and even was subjected to them (see Chapter 4.1).

In conclusion, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland is a relatively new community consisting of a relatively small number of individuals who fled during the struggle for independence between 1961 and 1991, and a majority who arrived in the 2000s. Thanks to its increase in numbers, the Eritrean diaspora today constitutes an important community in comparison with other migrant communities in Switzerland. Nonetheless, general awareness of its presence has grown only in the past few years, and the broader public seems still to be unaware of the existence of the two distinct generations of Eritrean migration. However, such an awareness is essential to understanding the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. It is likewise essential to understanding the findings of this research.

[11] In the mid-1990s, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) institutionalised the transfer of remittances that diaspora Eritreans often sent to the nation during and after the struggle for independence introducing the Diaspora Tax or the Recovery and Rehabilitation Tax. This tax involves that Eritrean nationals living abroad are required to pay two per cent of their annual income to the Eritrean state yearly to promote the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country (Buysse et al. 2017: 55-57; Hirt 2015b: 117; Tecle and Goldring 2013: 7). In return, the diaspora Eritreans receive services from the Eritrean government such as most importantly the extension of passports, but also "obtaining birth and marriage certificates, the right to purchase and own land and buildings in Eritrea, to operate a business, get exit visas for elderly relatives or to obtain permission to repatriate the bodies of deceased persons who wished to be buried in their home village" (Hirt 2013: 14).

3 Conceptual framework: Studying identity and belonging of the second generation in a translocal context

'Who am I? Where and to whom do I belong? Where or what is home? With whom or what do I identify with or distance myself from?' Questions about identity and belonging address issues of similarities and differences, of inclusion and exclusion, and of boundaries between us and them (Anthias 2013: 1). Depending on the context, some individuals' belonging is generally acknowledged and unquestioned while that of others is contested, controversial, or even denied. This is especially true for people with migration background or the post-migrant generation (Riegel and Geisen 2007: 8). Growing up and/or living in a context spanning national borders involves a variety of places, individuals, and societies, with which people form and maintain certain relationships. As a result, descendants of migrants are generally faced with at least two different national frames of references, to which they have to negotiate their affiliations and their sense of belonging and so construct their identity. Hence, as Fouron and Glick Schiller claim, "we must look transnationally to understand the dynamics that shape the identity of the children of immigrants" (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002: 193). As a human geographer, I take the view that places, localities[12], individuals, societies, and the resulting socio-spatial interconnections play an important role in the process of negotiating the belonging of migrants and their descendants. However, locality tends to receive rather less attention within studies on transnationalism, even though the work of various social scientists and geographers indicates the importance of place within transnational contexts, and especially in relation to identity and belonging (Brettell 2006; Christou 2004; Christou and King 2010; Herzig and Thieme 2007; Levitt 2012; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Thieme 2008, 2014). As a result, I advocate translocality as an approach that takes the situatedness within transnationalism into account (Brickell

[12] Place and locality are closely related terms and often seem to be used interchangeably. In a Dictionary of Human Geography, the two are even used to explain one another as locality is defined as "a place" (Castree et al. 2013). Cresswell argues that although the word place seems to speak for itself "no-one quite knows what they are talking about when they are talking about place" (Cresswell 2004: 1). My understanding of place is influence by Massey's notion of place: "A 'place' is formed out of the particular set of social relations which [occur and] interact at a particular location" (Massey, 1994: 169). Furthermore, places are not bounded, authentic or fixed entities but "particular moments in … intersecting social relations, nets of which have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed and renewed" (Massey 1994: 120). Locality then is defined as a "distinct place or location in which events occur" (Jonas 2010: 1971) or as "a place or region of sub-national spatial scale" (Painter 2009: 425). Thus, locality involves a specific location or position of a place and thus ties a place, understood as the net of intersecting social relations, to a particular locale or physical setting on a regional or local level. However, in accordance with this relational approach to place, localities are also not isolated or self-contained but are linked with various different places and localities (Massey 1993: 144–145).

and Datta 2011: 3) and so pays attention to the important influence of locality and socio-spatial contexts on identity and belonging.

The following chapter sets out the overarching conceptual framework of this PhD thesis that spans the three individual papers. I here outline central terminologies and concepts essential to following the argument and to understanding the findings and results of this thesis. This research concerns the negotiation of belonging and identity of second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland. In the first section, I call the use of identity as an analytical tool into question and introduce the concept of belonging, which intends to overcome the obstacles of the former. In the second section, I delineate the concepts of transnationalism and diaspora to reveal how negotiating the belonging of immigrant parents' children represents a process of transnational engagement. In the last section, I then introduce translocality as an analytical lens and illustrate why and how we may adopt translocality as an appropriate approach to examining the formation of identity and belonging of migrants' children. Further, the links to concepts introduced in previous sections are identified, and I point out how locality, belonging, and transnationalism conflate in the concept of translocality and thus together constitute an appropriate analytical framework to examine how second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland constitute their identity and sense of belonging.

3.1 From identity to belonging

Identity and belonging are interrelated and overlapping concepts; often, they even seem to be put on the same level and are used interchangeably. Fundamentally, both concepts address questions about 'the self', about who we are as a person, and to whom and what we feel affiliated. Consequently, identity and belonging focus on processes of inclusion and exclusion that engender alikeness and otherness (Anthias 2006: 19–22; Antonsich 2010: 644; Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011: xv–xviii). Thus, they both "simultaneously raise the question about boundaries of 'difference', the differences that count, their normative and political evolution, the boundaries of collectivities and social bounds, and how they are struggled over" (Anthias 2013: 3). Nevertheless, the two concepts are certainly not identical. For instance, one may identify with a collective without fully belonging to or being a full member of it; conversely, one may belong to a collective without fully identifying with it (Anthias 2009: 10). Hence, despite addressing similar and inextricable questions, 'who we are' and 'where we belong' are certainly different (Antonsich 2010: 646).

> Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not). Not all of these stories are about belonging to particular groupings and collectivities; they can be, for instance, about individual attributes, body images, vocational aspirations or sexual prowess. (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202)

This quote not only demonstrates the difference between questions about identity and belonging. It also illustrates that identity constitutes a categorical concept that sorts individuals into particular groups according to particular attributions (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 15). In contrast, belonging goes beyond simple categorisation and focuses on the process of boundary-drawing and how individuals form their relations and affiliations (Anthias 2013: 6–7).

Recent literature on identity and belonging seems to take a rather critical view of identity, both conceptually and theoretically (see Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Anthias 2002b; Yuval-Davis 2010; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2012). The most prominent criticism is voiced by Brubaker and Cooper, who argue that identity "tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 1). Similarly, Anthias claims that identity incorporates too many aspects and facets relating to 'the self' and identification with others, yet ignores structures, contexts, meanings, and practices that are crucial to understanding identity and its formation (Anthias 2002b, 2013). As a consequence, these scholars question the analytical value of identity. Inspired by Bourdieu, Brubaker and Cooper observe that identity is not only a 'category of analysis' for social scientists but also a 'category of practice' involving "categories of everyday social experience, developed and deployed by ordinary social actors" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 4). These authors acknowledge that identity today constitutes an important issue in everyday lives. However, they stress that the prominence of identity as a category of practice does not entail the necessity to use identity as a category of analysis (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 5). Hence, critics of identity emphasise that it constitutes a rather ambiguous, vague, and elusive term that is of little use as an analytical concept. Following this criticism, I take the view that the very distinction between identity as a category of practice and a category of analysis reveals that 'identity' can by no means be rejected, but that it represents a concept that is rather impracticable for examining identity in a constructivist understanding. Other than the essentialist approach, which grasps identity as externally fixed, the prevailing anti-essentialist or constructivist perspective comprehends identity not as given or pre-existing but rather as socially constructed and subject to continuous negotiation (see Berg-Sørensen et al. 2010; Hall 1990, 1996). However, the use of identity as an analytical approach seems to reintroduce "essentialism through the back door" (Anthias 2002b: 494). Thus, I agree with Anthias that identity presents a rather "slippery concept", which in fact may mislead us to understand it as "a possessive attribute of individuals or groups rather than a process" (Anthias 2009: 9). From my perspective, this is due to the confusion of identity as both a category of practice and a category of analysis. I argue that if we want to study identity as something socially constructed, or in a soft sense as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) put it, we must therefore employ different analytical concepts.

Recently, various scholars have refrained from the use of identity as an analytical tool and moved towards the concept of belonging (Anthias 2013: 6). Belonging

involves the connections and ties of individuals to "other people, places or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state" (Probyn 1996: 19). It constitutes a relational and dynamic process through which individuals negotiate their affiliations to a variety of individuals, collectives, objects, and places. Thus, belonging contains both a social and a spatial dimension. In contrast to identity, belonging is concerned less with attributions and feelings of similarities and differences and instead addresses the reciprocal process of relating. It thus focuses on the process of boundary making that involves the actual social and physical spaces[13] to which individuals relate (Anthias 2013: 7; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2012: 26). Yuval-Davis then outlines three levels of analysis of belonging: First, the *social location* includes the social and economic categories that determine positions within a collective. Second, the *individual's identifications and emotional attachments* comprises individuals' group affiliations, which are formed by the reproduction of identity narratives. And last, the *ethical and political value system* involves the evaluation of one's own and other's attachments (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199–204; Yuval-Davis 2011: 89–94). Hence, besides the social location, belonging also "involves affectual or emotional aspects; feeling 'at home', memories, ties and so on. It also involves sharing core moral values, which are not necessarily culturally specific ones; not all moral values signal belonging in a cultural community" (Anthias 2009: 10). Furthermore, Anthias points out that "narratives of locations and positionality" (Anthias 2002b: 493) then constitute an important aspect of studying belonging and analysing identity as a category of practice. Such narratives of location, she argues, tell "a story about how we place ourselves in terms of social categories such as those of gender, ethnicity and class at a specific point in time and space" (Anthias 2002b: 498). The emphasis on locations takes the situatedness of claims and attributions into account and thus considers the dynamic context in which they are constructed (Anthias 2002b: 502).

> There are a multiplicity of locations relating to gender, race and class, locality etc. and specific situational and conjectural spheres which affect our positions and therefore belongings in time and place. (Anthias 2013: 9–10)

In her more recent work, Anthias observes that belonging involves relating to a context or location in a social as well as a spatial sense in an actual physical or symbolic way (Anthias 2013: 7–9). Although she explicitly mentions both the social and spatial dimensions, she nevertheless seems to put more emphasis on location in a social sense. She understands location "as a social space which is produced within contextual,

[13] In comparison to place and locality (see footnote 12), space constitutes as a more abstract concept. While places are formed out of specific social relations at a particular location, I understand spaces as locations without such social connections for individuals. Space, however, may become places "as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (Tuan 2001[1977]: 6). Thus, spaces are locations lacking of substantial meaning to human beings.

spatial, temporal and hierarchical relations around the 'intersections' of social divisions and identities of class, ethnicity and gender (amongst others)" (Anthias 2008: 9). From my point of view, location thus appears to be predominantly understood as a social dimension and in relation to social categories, while less attention seems to be given to the spatial dimension. However, physical spaces seem to constitute the framework within which belonging is negotiated. Criticising this lack of the spatial dimension within analyses of belonging, Antonsich (2010) stresses the need to bring back the physical space and places and so reinforce the spatial dimension of locations. He claims that it is not only social collectivities but also physical places with which individuals form ties and construct their sense of belonging. He instances social, cultural, and economic relations to particular places, personal experiences, and memories, and simply legal status as elements that may all contribute to forming a sense of belonging (Antonsich 2010: 647–648). Thus, places represent an important aspect in the constitution of belonging, not simply as pre-given spatial entities but understood in a social constructivist perception as constructed through the interplay and interconnections between place and society.

I agree with Pries that "nothing social can exist without a spatial dimension and nothing spatial can lack a societal dimension" (Pries 2005: 171). Thus, I argue that 'the social' is not independent of 'the spatial' but that the two coexist and are closely linked to each other. Therefore, both dimensions and their interrelation are equally important aspects of belonging. Furthermore, Anthias stresses that belonging is constituted through experiences and practices of inclusion in and exclusion from social location (Anthias 2006: 22). I argue that the like is true of locations in a spatial sense. Belonging thus depends on the personal experiences and practices of individuals in both social and spatial locations. In summary, to study identity and belonging, we first have to focus on the individuals' narratives of locations in both social and spatial senses: how they negotiate their relation and affiliation to it and how they position themselves in the broader social field. In concrete, these narratives may be about locating, dislocating, or relocating oneself, about inclusion and exclusion or about alikeness and otherness (Anthias 2002a: 227). Furthermore, this relational process of inclusion and exclusion is influenced not only by self-attribution but also ascription and identification by others. Additionally, we also should focus on personal experiences and practices, not only in terms of social locations but also in a spatial sense with physical places and the socio-spatial interconnections at these locations. Doing so may reveal how individuals develop their relations and affiliations and may reveal how they negotiate their identity and belonging.

Belonging thus constitutes a useful strategy, not only for making identity analytically tangible and understandable but also for studying how individuals negotiate their affiliations and relations to other individuals, collectives, physical locations, and places. Furthermore, the focus "on narratives of location and positionality enables a complete abandonment of the residual elements of essentialization" (Anthias 2009: 495). Applying the concept of belonging and placing

narratives of location and positionality at the centre of analysis makes it possible to understand identity formation as a dynamic process and thus to study. Yet, I propose that we should emphasise the spatial dimension within such narratives paying attention to places and their socio-spatial contexts to studying the negotiation of belonging. I take the view that focusing on narratives of locations, positionality, and belonging in such a way may help to overcome the constraints of identity as an analytical concept.

3.2 From diaspora to transnationalism

Diaspora and transnationalism are two prominent and often-used concepts in migration studies that are closely linked. Because they refer to similar kinds of people involved in forced and voluntary migration, the boundaries between the concepts are blurred and overlap to the extent that they are inseparable (Faist 2010: 9–12; Herzig and Thieme 2007: 1078). However, although diaspora and transnationalism "are sometimes used interchangeably, the two terms reflect different intellectual genealogies" (Faist 2010: 9).

Diaspora is a long-standing concept that has undergone considerable changes and "has experienced a veritable inflation of applications and interpretations" (Faist, 2010: 12). Traditionally, diasporas are understood as globally dispersed ethnic and religious communities that have a collective understanding of their home country, which they perceive as their true and ideal home. Hence, a diaspora is characterised by features such as dispersal, common history, collective memories and myths, idealisation of 'home', ethnic group consciousness, and dreams of return (Cohen 1997 cited in: Esman 2009: 14; Safran 1991: 83–84; Vertovec 1999: 2–7). Over time, the notion of diaspora has developed. In the 1990s, social constructionist scholars criticised two central elements of the concept of diaspora by decomposing the notion of homeland and ethnic and religious community; they also claimed that identities are de-territorialised and in a continuous transformation of construction and deconstruction (Cohen, 2008: 1–2). Thus, new understandings of diaspora have emerged. In a postmodern perception, diaspora is seen as a condition emerging through experiences, states of mind, senses of identity, and identifications of individuals and thus acknowledging the fluidity or vitality of identities (Anthias 1998: 565–566; Herzig 2006: 52–53; Vertovec 1999: 450–451; Wahlbeck 2002: 229). Furthermore, diasporas are also held to be accountable for "production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena" (Vertovec 1997: 289). Thus, the concept of diaspora has turned from a too-rigid attention to ethnic ties and boundaries and now takes hybridity and new ethnicities among migrants into account and recognises the dynamic characteristics of diaspora communities. Hence, today we may understand a diaspora as any "migrant community that maintains material or sentimental attachments to its country of origin (its home country), while adapting to the limitations and opportunities in its country of settlement (its host country)" (Esman 2009: 14). However, such a community is characterised by

a great emphasis on a primordial original identity based on their history and has a long-lasting stability (King 2011: 144).

In the context of migration, questions of belonging may be not only crucial but also omnipresent to migrants, since they are not only separated from their original homes but also have to settle at new places and find their way in new socio-spatial surroundings. The perspective on migration as a transnational phenomenon in particular has brought 'belonging' back on the agenda (Antonsich 2010: 652; Mee and Wright 2009: 772–773). In the early 1990s, Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc introduced the concept of **transnationalism** and defined it as a social process "by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al. 1994: 7). Migrants establish transnational social fields or spaces that span geographical, cultural, and political borders (Glick Schiller et al. 1992: ix). Pries argues that transnational social spaces may be thought of as dense, institutionalised, permanent interrelations or networks of social practices, artefacts, and symbolic representations. They are not connected or bound to specific geographical locations but extend beyond the boundaries of nation-states and their societies (Pries 2008: 7; Pries 2016: 448). Hence, transnationalism encompasses a variety of processes and activities transcending international borders that may take various forms (Vertovec 1999: 447). Scholars have identified three basic categories of transnational activities or initiatives: economic, social or cultural, and political. Economic interactions include money transfer as remittances or other financial flows, informal import-export businesses, or trade through formal transnational entrepreneurships (see for instance Newland and Patrick 2004; Portes and Yiu 2013). Social or cultural transnationalism includes social networks between home and the exile communities or cultural practices through which migrants maintain social and cultural ties to their homes (see for instance Levitt 2002; Thieme and Müller-Böker 2010). Lastly, studies on political transnational activities (see for instance Lyons and Mandaville 2012; Ong 1999) reveal interactions between the home country and expatriates through migrants' formal and informal political engagements and questions of citizenship (Herzig 2006: 55–59; King and Christou 2008: 9–11; Portes 1999: 474; Portes et al. 1999: 217–221; Thieme 2006: 57–68; Vertovec 2001: 575). Such transnational practices, processes, and activities are not only organised bottom-up on the initiative of the migrants from below. Economic, political, social, cultural and religious organisations, multinational corporations, and national governments may also promote transnationalism from above (Al-ali et al. 2001: 578; Guarnizo 1997; Portes et al.1999: 221). Hence, transnationalism today is an acknowledged and omnipresent concept that both refers to the actual circulation of individuals and to a more abstract cross-border process involving circulation of financial capital, values, ideas, and images (Bernal 2004: 4; Boccagni et al. 2016: 2). Studies thus focus not only on the flows of people, goods, and objects across borders but also on broader issues such as citizenship, political engagements, nation building, belonging, and identity formation

and thereby on the transnational flows of ideas, values, and practices (Herzig 2006: 56; Lee 2008: 4).

Because diasporas are dispersed and dislocated from their imagined idealised origin for generations, they consist not only of immigrants themselves but also their descendants. In contrast, the literature generally describes transnationalism as a phenomenon solely of the migrant generation. Thus, the question arises to what extent the successive generations are also involved in transnationalism (Levitt 2009: 1225–1226). Hess and Korf reveal that scholars disagree over the engagement in transnationalism of children of migrant parents (Hess and Korf 2014: 421–422). Here, I claim that individuals of this so-called second generation (on second generation see also Chapter 4.1.2) generally grow up in a transnational setting and therefore are at least affected and influenced by transnationalism and transnational activities and experiences. Furthermore, the rather ambiguous term 'second generation' bears implicit assumptions about origin and about not being native. This label indicates that second-generation individuals are not considered full members of the host society despite being born and raised in it but are linked directly to a migration context (Toivanen 2014: 23). Thus, people with migration backgrounds are constantly confronted with questions of origin, home, belonging, and identity in their everyday lives (Riegel and Geisen 2007: 8). Fouron and Glick Schiller suggest that "we must look transnationally to understand the dynamics that shape the identity of the children of immigrants" (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002: 193). Likewise, I argue that we should do so too when studying the belonging of the second generation. Children of immigrant parents have multiple reference systems including a plurality of nation-states, societies, and socio-spatial frameworks, to which they have to negotiate their relations and their (non-)belonging. Thus, to understand how second-generation individuals form and negotiate their belonging, we have to consider and regard the cross-border social spaces in which they grew up. However, to take the spatial dimension of this process sufficiently into account, I claim that *translocality* may further help to examine and analyse how individuals of the second generation constitute and negotiate their sense of belonging and positioning in the transnational social fields in which they have been growing up.

3.3 From transnationalism to translocality

Transnationalism has "led to a notion of disembeddedness of transnational activities, suggesting that living or acting transnationally means to be delocalized, free of attachment and emplacement" (Verne 2012: 16). Drawing upon transnationalism, translocality then brings locality and place back into focus and so attempts to overcome the placelessness or the deterritorialised notion of transnationalism (Brickell and Datta 2011: 1). Similar to transnationalism, translocality concerns issues related to modern forms of mobility and migration but "without losing sight of the importance of localities in people's lives" (Oakes and Schein 2006: 1). Contemporary research on

transnationalism increasingly takes the implications and significance of space and place into consideration and focuses on the relations between the local and the transnational (Featherstone et al. 2007: 384; Verne 2012: 16). The concept of translocality thus "has become increasingly influential, capturing the ways in which trans-migrants are embedded in place, unable to escape their local context despite being 'transnational'" (Featherstone et al. 2007: 385). This is particularly important because migrants and individuals living transnationally are not just somewhere in the air (see Ley 2004) or "in some kind of vacuum in-between two planets" (Ariam, interview 2013), as one of the interviewees of this study has put it. Rather, they find themselves living at various places and/or referring to various localities and contexts both within and across national borders, a phenomenon that can be taken into consideration by the concept of translocality.

Different scholars refer to Appadurai, who was influential in coining the term translocality (Brickell and Datta 2011; Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013; Mandaville 2002; Smith 2001; Verne 2012). In his work, Appadurai identifies various specific locations such as border areas, refugee camps, immigrant neighbourhoods, cities, and tourist zones as translocalities. He understands translocality to refer to localities with specific human organisations, contexts, and settings that are produced and reproduced by displaced and deterritorialised populations beyond a national scale (Appadurai 1996; 2003). More recently, the increasing research on translocality has contributed to the conceptual development of the term (see for instance Conradson and Mckay 2007; Freitag and Oppen von 2010; Greiner 2010; Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Lohnert and Steinbrink 2005; Oakes and Schein 2006; Vathi 2013; Verne 2012). Brickell and Datta observe that translocality today is "widely seen to be a form of 'grounded transnationalism' – a space where deterritorialized networks of transnational social relations take shape through migrant agencies" (Brickell and Datta 2011: 3). Translocality places particular emphasis on localities and focuses on the interrelationships between physical places and involved actors, be they individuals, organisations, or institutions, and their networks, including all their interactions. Further, the concept explores the consequences of these socio-spatial connections on these places and actors as well as the effects of spaces, places, and actors on the socio-spatial connections (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013: 1). Thus, translocality "as a research perspective … aims at highlighting the fact that the interactions and connections between places, institutions, actors and concepts have far more diverse, and often even contradictory effects than is commonly assumed" (Freitag and Oppen von 2010: 5).

Furthermore, the focus on 'the local' and localities then helps to overcome the 'methodological nationalism' of transnationalism, which assumes the nation-state to be the natural unit of analysis (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Translocality thus turns away from the primacy of the nation and the tendency to blend national borders with social borders (Faist 2010: 24; Ley 2004: 5) and thus transcends the "nation-centred framing of social, cultural and political relations" (Featherstone et al. 2007: 385).

Instead, the concept takes into account the local-local relations that exist in the settings of transnational migration and so incorporates "the very variegated localized context where transnational networks are maintained, negotiated and sustained in everyday … live" (Brickell and Datta 2011: 3). Thus, translocality serves as an apt analytical tool for unpacking transnationalism and transnational lifestyles, contexts, and practices and grounding them in the localities in which mobile individuals are situated and to which they relate in a transnational social field. Hence, "translocality opens up a way to look at the ways in which the movement and manifold connections of people, material objects and ideas … are actually lived" (Verne 2012: 19).

3.4 Synopsis: Studying belonging in a translocal context

> The focus on location … recognizes the importance of context, the situated nature of claims and attributions and their production in complex and shifting locals. (Anthias 2002b: 502)

Anthias has criticised the disregard of structures, contexts, and practices in the study of identity; these seem to be of particular importance in transnational settings as these involve the simultaneous co-existence of multiple contexts (Anthias 2008, 2009). Such issues may be taken into account through translocality. Translocality highlights the interplay of mobility and situatedness and reveals the importance of localities and socio-spatial interconnections. In so doing, it succeeds in unveiling the relevance and effects on individuals of locally grounded connections between people, objects, and ideas. As a consequence, the translocal approach is often applied to examine identity formation in the multi-local settings of mobility and migration (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013: 378).

Children of immigrant parents "weave their collective identities out of multiple affiliations and positionings and link their cross-cutting belongingness with complex attachments and multiple allegiances to issues, peoples, places, and traditions beyond the boundaries of their resident nation-states" (Çaglar 2001: 610). Growing up and living in such a transnational space that spans national borders involve a variety of places, societies, and socio-spatial interconnections and thus create different frames of references, to which individuals may, or may have to, negotiate their affiliations and constitute their belonging. For second-generation individuals, experiencing localities and socio-spatial contexts may constitute crucial moments that affect their 'self' and help them position themselves within the transnational social field. Translocality thus presents a useful conceptual tool for examining the second generation's identity formation and negotiation of belonging thanks to its emphasis of 'the local', its groundedness, and its focus on how individuals relate to specific localities, places, and socio-spatial interconnections. Unpacking the process of grappling with social and physical localities through locally situated and concrete everyday experiences and practices enables the examination of how second-generation individuals form their

identity and negotiate their sense of belonging. In conclusion, I take the view that this conceptual framework comprising belonging, transnationalism, and translocality constitutes an appropriate lens through which to study the belonging of post-migrant individuals.

4 Methodological approach

When I started this research project in mid-2012, Eritreans in Switzerland had hardly been noticed by the Swiss public, even though the Eritrean community had been growing since 2006 (see Chapter 2.3). Media attention to Eritrean immigrants in Switzerland and to the country itself only began to increase then. Similarly, few reports and scholarly studies were available on the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland (see Bühler 2012; Eyer and Schweizer 2010; Glatthard 2012). To acquire some basic and first-hand knowledge about Eritreans in Switzerland, I participated in various symposia and congresses mainly designed for people encountering Eritreans in their work. As a result, I not only learned about Eritreans and Eritrea but also came into contact with various specialists and researchers as well as with Eritreans themselves. Due to the scarcity of information about Eritreans in Switzerland at that time, such contacts proved to be important sources of such information. Initially, I was interested in recent developments within the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland and in the new post-millennial Eritrean refugee movement. However, after a first review of the existing academic literature on the Eritrean diaspora in combination with discussions with my PhD committee, I realised that the second generation represents a comparatively understudied group. Thus, I decided to shift the focus of my research from the newly arriving Eritrean asylum seekers to the second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland.

In accordance with the conceptual framework, this project is designed as a multi-sited research project (Marcus 1995). To study the influence of multiple localities on the second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging, I focused on individuals' encounters and experience with and at specific locations. Therefore, field research not only took place in Switzerland but also involved accompanying a group of research participants on their journey to Eritrea; this provided valuable insights into their experience with various locations there (see Chapter 4.2).

Transparency and intersubjective comprehensibility are essential to ensure the quality of qualitative research projects, which is aided thorough the description of the research process (Steinke 2004). The chapter therefore provides insights into the operationalisation and implementation of the research process. Furthermore, it addresses the challenges, limitations and biases I faced during this research, as well as how these were dealt with to foster the quality of this research.

4.1 The Eritrean diaspora – a sensitive research field

Conducting field research in a contested or conflict-ridden field is methodologically challenging. Inspired by Cohen and Arieli's definition of conflict environments, such research field may be understood as settings or contexts "in which different individuals or groups have varying needs, goals, or interests and perceive that they are contradicted with those of other individuals or groups" (Cohen and Arieli 2011: 424). Most research fields of qualitative social research are contested to a certain extent, since they are often occupied by actors with dissenting needs or opinions. In the case of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland, the tensions between members of the diaspora create such a contested field (see Chapter 2). Goodhand, who engages in research in actual conflict zones and post conflict areas, stresses that the researcher's "understanding of the patterns and dynamics of conflict" (Goodhand 2000: 12) thereby is of central importance. Hence, it was essential to prepare by learning about the reasons and dynamics of the tensions within the Eritrean diaspora before starting the field research.

In the course of this research project, I have experienced the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland as a highly politically sensitive research field that presented various challenges and obstacles to doing research. When I started this research, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland was witnessing various internal conflicts. Two study participants pointed out that the conflicts within the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland at that time seemed to be more pronounced than in other countries. It involved the split of the Eritrean Orthodox church in Zurich (Bühler 2012: 89–101) or violent clashes and brawls at a cultural event in early 2012 or the Independence Day celebration in 2013 near Zurich (Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen 2012; Serafini, 2013). Although the open violence has declined, the diaspora-internal tensions, which appear to arise mainly from differing opinions about the home country's political environment and the ongoing public debates about Eritrea on an international level (see Chapter 2), seem to remain. In the course of my research, I generally noticed an omnipresence of politics and political debate about Eritrea.

In conflict environments, individuals "can be highly suspicious of outsiders and express a preference to refrain from exposure" (Cohen and Arieli 2011: 425). Alike, Glatthard highlights that the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland is characterised by suspicion and mutual distrust between Eritreans who do not know each other (see Glatthard 2012). However, in the course of this research, I have observed this mistrust not only amongst Eritreans but also towards outsiders and researchers. People within high-tension environments "are often quick to judge researchers a possible threat" (Jipson and Litton 2000: 154). Furthermore, people in contexts of perceived politicisation of information often refrain from participating in research (Goodhand 2000: 13). In the present case, it appeared to me that potential participants had already made up their minds about me or my research and had particular notions about the politicisation of information, as many avoided any contact from the very beginning. During my research, I learned that I was allocated to one of two political camps,

depending on the perceived politicisation of information. On the one hand, I was told at a symposium that I attended purely as a listener that some participants obviously assumed me to have a rather uncritical positive stance towards Eritrea, even though I never talked to them nor made any public statements. On the other hand, the Honorary Consul of Eritrea in Switzerland mentioned in a personal conversation that some Eritreans in Switzerland might have lost trust in researchers. As I understood this statement, reports and studies on Eritrea often seem to be perceived as critical of Eritrea. Likewise, an Eritrean man, whom I approached with a request to help me to find eligible study participants, replied that it proved difficult to help me find such participants. He stressed that the people he approached were sceptical of my motives and therefore cautious and reluctant. He added: "you can well imagine why" (Statement of an Eritrean father, 2014). On the basis of my field experience, I take the view that the tensions within the diaspora, the perceived omnipresence of politics, and the often critical or negative reports and studies towards Eritrea could together be responsible for their rejection of research. Hence, some second-generation Eritreans seemed to assume a certain politicisation of information and thus preferred to refrain from participating in the study.

4.1.1 Access to the field

Developing relationships of trust between researcher and participants and respecting the privacy and anonymity of individuals[14] may help gain potential participants' confidence and thus to overcome this silence (Goodhand 2000: 13–14). I developed a range of strategies to increase trust among potential participants and thus gain access to the sensitive research field of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland and specifically to second-generation Eritreans:

- access through key persons or gatekeepers;
- considering my own positionality; and
- framing the research as politically uncharged and unbiased as possible.

First of all, I tried to identify **key persons or gatekeepers** that could introduce me to the field. They may support the researcher to gain access to institutions, organisations, and social groups in general; may indicate and name possible participants; and may establish contact between researcher and study participants (Wolff 2004: 199; Merkens 2004: 166; Burgess 1991: 47–49). In addition, gatekeepers may also be able to promote a feeling of trust towards the researcher and so persuade potential participants to take part in the study (Helfferich 2009: 175). Gatekeepers proved to be essential to me in even finding second-generation Eritreans in the first instance. Besides the relatively small number of second-generation Eritreans eligible for this research (see Chapter

[14] To protect the participants' anonymity and identity, I adopted pseudonyms different from their real names. Furthermore, I do not provide information such as age, place of residence, or ethnicity, just to name a few. Second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland are a rather small group, and individuals might easily become identifiably.

4.1.2), second-generation Eritreans were quite hard to find and identify, as they are generally well integrated in society and thus remain rather inconspicuous. I detected various actors as gatekeepers: On the one hand, experts on the Eritrean diaspora (see Chapter 4.2.3). On the other hand, individuals of Eritrean origin, such as parents of second-generation Eritreans or members of the second generation themselves, who could help me to establish contact. From the gatekeepers I identified, only a few were willing or able to support me in gaining access to second-generation Eritreans. I learned that their ability to open the door to the second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland was limited. This seems to be mainly linked with the sensitivity of the research field discussed above. In addition, the boundaries between second-generation Eritreans as gatekeepers and the snowball-sampling method (on snowball sampling see Chapter 4.1.2) seems to be rather blurred.

Concerning the consideration and transparent disclosure of the researcher's **positionality** as a second strategy, England argues that "the researcher's positionality and biography directly affect fieldwork and that fieldwork is a dialogical process which is structured by the researcher and the participants" (England 1994: 80). According to Madge, many characteristics of the researcher's identity may have direct influence on the data collection process, including race, nationality, age, gender, or socio-economic status. Thus, "who we are (or who we are perceived to be) will inevitably influence the information we (are allowed to) collect" (Madge 1993: 295). Hence, reflexive positionality may help to structure or consolidate the relation between researcher and study participants, which seems to be particularly crucial in sensitive research fields. First of all, my position was shaped by personal biographical characteristics as well as the period of my research. My role as a non-Eritrean interested in Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora exactly at the time of emerging diaspora-internal tensions, critical reports, and international sanctions against Eritrea certainly influenced the conduct of fieldwork. However, the political division was the aspect most challenging to positionality. During the research, it appeared to me that every discussion in the Eritrean case is linked at some point to politics, from which one cannot easily withdraw. To me, it seemed that even the attempt to keep away from it or to refrain from making statements about Eritrean politics might be interpreted by others. Although I intended to avoid talking about politics and political issues, since these do not represent core issues of this PhD thesis, I could not avoid such topics emerging. As a reaction, I had to position myself in some way. Thus, I tried to emphasise my position as a researcher who is interested in the participants' realities and who aims to analyse the data without moral judgement. I also pointed out that my initial knowledge about Eritrea was mainly based on existing scientific literature and reports on Eritrea since these constitute the prime sources for me as a non-Eritrean researcher. Thus, I intended to demonstrate the importance of participants' own personal narratives and knowledge as well as my interest in them to convince the more critical individuals to participate. However, this involved the necessity of personal contact, which, as mentioned, was often difficult to establish in the first place.

As a third strategy, which is connected with the issue of positionality, I **framed my research interest and formulated the research questions as politically uncharged and unbiased as possible**. Although it seems to be practically impossible in qualitative research to avoid taking sides due to subjective sympathies (Becker 1967: 245–246), it was important to make second-generation Eritreans aware that the research questions did not seek to judge or criticise their political view. In fact, the research avoided political topics but focused on the narratives and life stories of second-generation Eritreans to understand the process of creating a sense of belonging in this sensitive field. Putting emphasis on the second-generation Eritreans' real-life realities, experiences, and narratives enabled me to gain insights about how they constitute relations, ties, and affiliations to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora but goes beyond politics. By decoupling the research interests from political debates, I intended to convey the de-politicisation of the information to potential participants and so gain more profound insights and answers to my research questions. Thus, focusing on questions of identity formation and belonging appeared to me to offer a constructive and useful approach that circumvented the obstacles presented by diaspora-internal tensions.

In sum, these three different yet interrelated strategies were applied to facilitate access to potential study participants. Nevertheless, I still experienced various limitations. I argue that withdrawal from politically sensitive questions and conflicts appears to be practically impossible in this research field. Further, negligence of one's own positioning or framing politically non-sensitive research in a highly sensitive and politicised setting may also entail the unintended and random attribution and allocation by others. Similarly, contact with particular individuals and gatekeepers may also influence peoples' perceptions on my positionality. Thus, the strategies I applied could not fully overcome the limitations and obstacles that exist in sensitive research fields such as this. As a result, access to the field not only proved challenging but was also rather limited. That is why the sample of this case study is relatively small. Nonetheless, the triangulation of various data collection methods and intense and personal contact with willing participants (see Chapter 4.2) was helpful in acquiring valuable and reliable data.

4.1.2 Sample and sampling method

To select interview partners, I applied a purposeful sampling approach (Patton 1990). According to Patton, the "logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful* sampling" (Patton 1990: 169; emphasis in original). The idea of such an information-oriented selection of cases is that it aims at maximising "the utility of information from small samples and single cases" (Flyvbjerg 2006: 230).

Thus, the aim of purposeful sampling is to select cases, persons, and data that are expected to be rich in information pertinent to the research questions.

First of all, the determination of the case group, the second-generation Eritreans, can be described as a **criterion sampling** (Patton 1990: 176–177). In the context of migration, the term 'second generation' strictly spoken refers to children of migrant parents who were born and raised in a country different to their ancestral origin. Yet, children of migrants do not necessarily have to be born abroad but may also have migrated with their parents. Rumbaut argues that the latter "can be further refined into three distinct groups, depending on whether their migration occurred during early childhood (ages 0–5), middle childhood (6–12), or adolescence (in their teens)" (Rumbaut 2004: 1167). Besides this narrow statistical definition of the second generation, scholars argue that social definition then extends the first definition and includes those individuals who have migrated in early and middle childhood, as they have been socialised and educated mainly in their host countries. Furthermore, subjective definition then even goes a step further by including how individuals consider themselves (Skrbiš et al. 2007: 262–263; Aparicio 2007: 1170). In practice, the term 'second generation' then seems to be used to describe migrants' children who are largely socialised in their country of residence, whether they were born there or in their country of origin. Consequently, this case study focuses not only on the second generation in the narrow statistical sense but also includes individuals of Eritrean origin who are born and/or raised in the diaspora. The crucial point is that they have been largely socialised in the diaspora and currently live in Switzerland. In selecting participants, I thus was guided by these sub-categories and by interviewees' statements and own opinions. An additional criterion was that they or their parents left Eritrea before the turn of the millennium. Firstly, this may guarantee that they have largely been raised in the diaspora, and secondly, that they do not belong to the second more recent period of migration. Furthermore, recognised refugees and thus Eritreans of the recent period of migration are generally prohibited from travelling to their home country due to their status (Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe 2016). Therefore, mainly individuals of the first period of migration and their children may travel back to Eritrea without legal consequences.

Within this group defined by the criterion sampling, the choice of individual cases was influenced by **maximum variation sampling** (Patton 1990: 172). The second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland do not constitute a homogenous group but show significant heterogeneity, for instance in age, gender, ethnicity, and place of residence. Furthermore, I decided not to focus on individuals of one or the other political camp but include second-generation Eritreans with diverse opinions. Nonetheless, the sample exhibits certain commonalities. As the earlier generation of migrants in Switzerland consists mainly of ethnic Tigrinya (Glatthard 2012: 51), the majority of the study participants belong to this ethnic group. Along with maximum variation sampling, **theoretical sampling** was applied. This means that the researcher continuously decides during the research process what data to collect next (Glaser and Strauss 2006[1967]:

45). Often, only the research process and the collection and analysis of data may lead to further interesting and information-rich cases. Last, I applied the **snowball or chain sampling** (Patton 1990: 176). This is an approach to locating further informants with the help of already known individuals or participants. Cohen and Arieli argue that this presents a meaningful strategy for coping with the challenges of conflict environments, since there, individuals are often marginalised, hidden, and thus hard for the researcher to access (Cohen and Arieli 2011: 423).

As a consequence of this sampling strategy, the actual sample then consists of 21 second-generation Eritreans, twelve females and nine males, who meet the criteria described above. The majority of participants were either born in the diaspora or left Eritrea at an early age. Three were already in their early teenage years when they emigrated from Eritrea. However, interviews with these three participants made it apparent that their major socialisation happened in the diaspora. Thus, they meet the requirements of the social definition of the second generation. Furthermore, two participants are children of one Eritrean and one Western parent. These two both grapple with their Eritrean background. In this context, both stressed their binational origin and thus feel at least partly Eritrean. Portes and Zhou also stress that "native-born children with at least one foreign-born parent" (Portes and Zhou 1993: 75) may be understood as second generation. With this and the subjective definition of the second generation in mind, it thus seems appropriate to include them in the study sample. Furthermore, the sample includes six second-generation Eritreans who were raised in countries other than Switzerland but then migrated to Switzerland. While five were born and/or raised in Europe, only one was raised in a non-European country outside Africa. Because the research is about second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland, it was crucial that all of them currently reside in Switzerland and so experience and know the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland.

In the course of the journey to Eritrea, I also had conversations and discussions with numerous second-generation Eritreans as well as local Eritreans (see Chapter 4.2). From these, I gained further information and insights. However, such contacts while on field trips are difficult put into numbers and may not always be probed to meet the requirements. Thus, I see these as a kind of extended sample that needs to be mentioned here. Additionally, the sample includes several Eritreans from the new period of migration and just a few Eritreans of the first generation who arrived as adults. Although these do not strictly belong to the defined target group, the main advantages expected from these were to obtain overall broader picture, prevent biases and maintain openness and so safeguard against the negligence of important aspects.

4.2 Data collection procedure

> …if the task is to get beyond mobility, and understand how migration effects people's sense of belonging and identity, it is necessary to listen to how migrants themselves interpret their situatedness, and how they culturally construct 'histories' and 'herstories'. (Sørensen 1998: 246)

The qualitative research approach is typically used "to study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011: 3) and so focuses on the views and perspectives of the people concerned: the participants. In doing so, it aims to "contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns and structural features (Flick et al. 2004: 3). To gather data that can answer the research questions, I have applied a combination or triangulation (see Flick 2011) of various qualitative data collection methods.

4.2.1 Semi-structured episodic interviews

To study the process of forming and negotiating the identity and belonging of second-generation Eritreans, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with second-generation Eritreans that in some parts were influenced by the episodic interview technique (Flick 2000, 2007).

As indicated by the opening quote, the personal views and narrations of the participants are crucial to understanding the process of identity formation and the negotiation of belonging. Anthias suggests that "narrative accounts by actors are often the most accessible for social researchers who are interested in the ways individuals understand and interpret their place in the world" (Anthias 2002: 498). Narratives may be understood as "the type of discourse composition that draws together diverse events, happenings, and actions of human lives into thematically unified goal-directed processes" (Polkinghorne 1995: 5). Furthermore, they are often employed by people "to express both individual and collective identities … and to situate themselves in their social contexts" (Mohatt et al. 2014: 6). Accordingly, I investigated the subjective narrations of experiences, activities, and events of second-generation Eritreans with emphasis on localities and socio-spatial contexts spanning national borders.

The episodic interview focuses on the individual narratives of the participants. Particular emphasis is placed on the individuals' subjective experiences, situations, events, and practices as these are understood to be the foundation of peoples' narrations. The episodic interview aims to disclose two kinds of knowledge:

- *Episodic knowledge* is situational or context-related knowledge and thus is closely tied to concrete circumstances and individual experiences.
- *Semantic knowledge* involves individual interpretations of relations or generalisations drawn from the episodic knowledge and thus is characterised by de-contextualisation. As such, it presents a more abstract form of knowledge.

The episodic interview thus creates room for context-related statements and narrations while seeking participants' interpretations and general statements on the questions or topics concerned (Flick 2000: 77, 2007: 238–239). In the conceptual part of this thesis (see Chapter 3), I have argued for the consideration of context in the study of identity and belonging. Translocality and the concept of belonging stress the situatedness within settings of mobility and migration and thus call for the incorporation of contexts and situations in the study of identity. I take the view that the particularity of the episodic interview, paying attention as it does to individuals' experiences, events, practices, and activities, offers a valuable opportunity to include the situated and context-related characteristics of identity and belonging. However, the interviews in this study should not be understood as a pure form of episodic interview but rather as influenced by this interview format.

In the interviews, I was interested in second-generation Eritreans' narratives and deliberations about how they relate to their in-betweenness and to the ambiguous term second generation, about their families and their circles of friends, and about their relationships to the diaspora, to Switzerland, and to Eritrea. The episodic interview proved useful as a means of revealing interesting situations, experiences, events, and contexts that influence their sense of belonging and their identity, especially regarding relations to other people, locations, and countries. The interviews were based on a semi-structured interview guide that enables the researcher's flexibility during the interview and a certain openness to issues important to the interviewees while helping to structure and direct the interview where necessary. Thus, it serves as a research tool not only to pose prepared questions but also to stimulate narrations that help to guide the conversation (Helfferich 2014: 565–569; Gläser and Laudel 2010: 115–116). Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 2.5 hours. In some cases, the dialogue continued after the interview in a less structured and more everyday conversation that turned out to be just as useful as the interview.

4.2.2 Participant observation

Participant observation (see Spradley 1980: 53–62) is a common methodological approach in qualitative research to gaining knowledge about individuals' and groups' behaviours, actions, and practices and their associated impacts (Bohnsack et al. 2013: 20; Flick 2007: 287–288). The method involves the simultaneous combination of document analysis, interviewing, direct participation, observation, and introspection (Denzin 2009[1970]: 185–186). However, the key element of this methodological

approach is the researcher's engagement in the field through participating in activities with and observing the subjects of interest. Thus, the research method requires the researcher to be both a participant emotionally engaging and sympathising with the individuals and an impartial observer striving for scientific objectivity. This dual role constitutes one of the major methodological challenges of participant observations. Sharing life with the subjects and participating in their daily routine bears the risk of going native, becoming biased, and so losing the critical perspective necessary to a researcher (Flick 2007: 281–296; Spittler 2001: 1–3; Tedlock 1991: 69–71).

I applied participant observation as a data collection method during the second-generation Eritreans' journey to Eritrea. In summer 2014, I travelled with a small group of diaspora-born Eritreans, all in their twenties, to Eritrea. The stay in Eritrea lasted almost one month and involved a stay in Eritrea's capital Asmara, various family visits to different towns and villages, and a trip to the Red Sea coast. During my research, I learned that this appears to be a fairly typical journey for second-generation Eritreans who travel to their ancestral home country. Following the people represents a technique of the multi-sited research approach (Marcus 1995: 106) and provided deep insights about the second-generation Eritreans' experiences with various localities. Besides this very specific journey, I was able to talk to other diaspora Eritreans who visited Eritrea and learn about their visits; this provided insights into the journeys of other second-generation Eritreans. During the journey, I wrote down my experiences, conversations, discussions, and observations as precisely as possible in a field diary (Spradley 1980: 69–72). Consequently, my field notes are generally a rather descriptive record of the things I saw and experienced or the issues discussed. Further, to ensure both the participants' and my own safety, they mainly take the form of indirect speech.

An important aspect of participant observation is the extent of observation and open communication about the researcher's role and research goals (Flick 2007: 282–283). To me, it was important that the second-generation Eritreans I was travelling with knew me and were aware that I was studying second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland. A meeting prior to the trip helped me to introduce myself to the group. During the journey to Eritrea, I certainly experienced the risk of going native. As the relationships between the accompanied persons and myself became more personal, I sometimes had to remind myself of my position as a researcher. Furthermore, being in Eritrea for the first time entailed the challenge of staying focused and not falling into the role of a tourist. After the journey to Eritrea, spatial and temporal distance helped me to consider and analyse my field notes again with the necessary objectivity. The descriptive style also helped to remember things that I had not sufficiently recognised or hadn't taken into account before. However, this required that I work through the field diary immediately after my return. Further, triangulations with semi-structured interviews, which were carried out both before and after the journey, turned out to be a helpful strategy to return to the objectivity that my role as a researcher required. In addition, statements from or discussions with other people such as Eritreans of the recent period of migration from Eritrea, parents of second-generation Eritreans, and

experts then helped me to remain open to a variety of perspectives. Participant observation thus provided direct insights and knowledge about second-generation Eritreans' activities, experiences, and practices in Eritrea. Subsequently, the interviews and discussions with various individuals and actors then helped me regain a more comprehensive view and not lose sight of the overall picture.

4.2.3 Expert interviews

I conducted one official expert interview with the Honorary Consul of Eritrea in Switzerland and three discussions with experts from scientific and legal fields, all strongly familiar with but not part of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. An expert is any person responsible for planning, developing, and implementing solutions of some kind and further has privileged access to information about the subject and people concerned, often through their profession (Meuser and Nagel 2009: 470; Locher 2015: 30). The experts' knowledge may involve knowledge about concrete operations, occurrences, and events *(technical knowledge)*, about processes as a result of their practical experience *(process knowledge)*, and the expert's subjective opinions and interpretations *(interpretative knowledge)* (Bogner and Menz 2009: 52–53).

There are three types of expert interviews, and each has a distinct purpose:

- The *exploratory expert interview* may be used to establish and develop the research idea and the structure of the research;
- The *systematising expert interview* collects systematic and complete inside information and knowledge about the questions concerned; and
- The *theory-generating expert interview* focuses on the subjective dimension of the expert's perceptions and interpretations in order to generate a theory (Bogner and Menz 2009: 46–48).

Both the type of knowledge the researcher is interested in and thus the type of interview may vary, depending on the researcher's goals and objectives.

The experts I contacted for this study have both special access to and knowledge about various aspects of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. One has a long-standing relation to Eritrea and its diaspora and is Honorary Consul of Eritrea in Switzerland. The others have professional experiences as academics or legal advisors for asylum seekers. The expert discussions took place at the beginning of and during the research project. Their overall purpose was to familiarise myself with the research topic and gain some first insights into the Eritrean community in Switzerland. Therefore, I was interested in the experts' knowledge and experience of issues such as past and recent emigration from Eritrea, the structure of the Eritrean diaspora and its development, the asylum procedure, and subjective estimations and perceptions of the Eritrean diaspora, just to name a few. Thus, the interviews and discussions sought all three types of expert knowledge and was, despite their exploratory character, a hybrid form of the three expert interview types listed above. The expert interview with the Honorary Consul of

Eritrea in Switzerland was designed as a semi-structured interview with an interview guide. As a result of his long-lasting connection to Eritrea and its society, this expert has deep knowledge of the old generation of Eritrean refugees. Thus, I also explored similar issues as with the other experts, but with special emphasis on the old generation of Eritrean migrants and their children, the second-generation Eritreans. In conclusion, I gained thorough technical, process, and interpretative knowledge about the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland with specific focus on the second generation.

4.3 Processing and analysing the data

Due to the mentioned data collection procedure, I acquired a variety of different types of data. The empirical dataset includes

- interviews with second-generation Eritreans and recent Eritrean asylum seekers;
- a field diary as a consequence of participant observation;
- expert interview and discussions; and
- field notes from interviews and discussions with a variety of individuals who could provide information valuable insight information about Eritrea, the Eritrean diaspora, and/or the second-generation Eritreans.

Interviews were generally recorded and transcribed. All of the recorded interviews except one were conducted in German. However, it was not always possible to record the interviews, for various reasons (e.g. location was inappropriate for recording, spontaneous interview acceptance, interviewee felt uneasy being recorded). Inspired by Spradley, who describes four different forms of field notes in participant observation (Spradley 1980: 69–72), I took notes during the interviews. As it proves simply impossible to note everything down, the notes generally took the form of "condensed accounts [that] often include phrases, single words, and unconnected sentences" (Spradley 1980: 69–70). Additionally, by writing down notes, impressions, and ideas, I kept memory minutes *(Gedächtnisprotokolle)* (Gläser and Laudel 2010: 192). On the basis of these memory minutes and the condensed accounts, I was subsequently able to fill in the details. Thus, I developed more expanded accounts (Spradley 1980: 70–71) and so reconstructed both the course and the content of the conversations as well and accurately as possible. Similar to this procedure, I took notes of discussions and conversations with second-generation Eritreans, recent Eritrean asylum seekers, experts, and all other actors that provided valuable information related to my research project. Although some of these were held in English, all the notes and thus the data were written down in German, which is also true for the field diary. I then analysed the data in that form and language and accurately translated the required data into English for later use.

The actual procedure of data analysis was inspired by the principles of grounded theory *(gegenstandsverankerte Theorie)* (Strauss and Corbin 1996). Grounded theory

constitutes a qualitative research method involving a range of systematic techniques for analysing data in an inductive manner. The initial focus of the analysis is on the concrete research topic or the subject under examination, which in the thesis at hand is the formation and negotiation of second-generation Eritreans' belonging and identity. In this method, the issues relevant to the research questions only reveal in the course of the research and the analysis process. Thus, the purpose is to develop or find a grounded theory about the subject or issue based on the empirical data (Strauss and Corbin 1996: 8). However, in my opinion the term 'theory' can be confusing in this context. Thus, I prefer to understand the aim of 'grounded theory' as to discover, disclose, and explain the social phenomena or processes on the basis of empirical data. In grounded theory, the coding procedure forms the foundation for the data analysis. The data are broken down analytically and subsequently put together in a new form by designating relationships and identifying categories representing the central phenomenon of the research (Strauss and Corbin 1996: 39–117). This coding procedure helps to break through the researchers' assumptions or distortions and ensures that the empirical data exemplifies the issue (Strauss and Corbin 1996: 29). Through the coding procedure of grounded theory, I was able to identify important aspects, phenomenon, circumstances, conditions, events, processes, and experiences that influence second-generation Eritreans' identity and belonging. Furthermore, through the conceptualisation and the connecting of the codes and categories, I was able to obtain information about how second-generation Eritreans constitute and negotiate identity and belonging.

In my opinion, the specific design of a paper-based dissertation presents a challenge for the procedure of data analysis according to grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin describe the circular characteristic and the interweaving of data collection and analysis typical of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1996: 40). Thus, coding, analysing, and collecting further data is an iterative process. As a result, the category system emerges from analysing the first interviews and then develops throughout the process. However, the paper-based dissertation requires starting to write scientific papers during the process of data collection and analysis. Consequently, I started to identify certain core categories or central themes from the category system while it was still forming. These include the journeys to Eritrea, Eritrean newcomers in Switzerland, and Eritrean history, which I then expanded on and analysed in three individual research papers (see Part II). In the course of analysing later interviews, I directly searched for these core categories to structure the data material and identify the important segments for each paper. Next, I coded the passages using open coding to retain the inductive nature of the procedure as far as was possible. Identifying categories and applying them to further data in a rather deductive manner is in contradiction to the inductive nature intended for the method. Nevertheless, in this paper-based dissertation, such a procedure seemed to be both appropriate and helpful. It enables the identification of important issues and topics in an early stage of the research process and structures the analysis of further data accordingly. Furthermore, the identification of core categories and themes in the course of the analysis seems likely to occur automatically; however,

the researcher must be aware of this to guarantee the inductive nature of the analysis from the empirical data. As the consequence of this procedure, the research papers thus cover important partial aspects of the overall research questions and, as a whole, provide coherent information about the entire research issue.

Triangulation in the process of data collection (see Chapter 4.2) affected the data analysis procedure, which also entailed triangulation. As discussed above, besides oral data, participant observation also involves the acquisition of other sorts of data in visual and textual forms. In the course of my data collection, I also saw and looked through text documents and thus gathered data from such sources. The documents were accessible either on the Internet or through personal contacts. However, I was not able to collect all the documents in physical form; in these cases, I took notes. An approach to document analysis published by Bowen helped to analyse this textual material (Bowen 2009). First, the author observes that documents may serve different purposes (see Bowen 2009: 29–31). The textual data I gathered can be considered as a supplementary source of data that provides additional information about the issues concerned. Conversely, documents such as newspaper articles, blog posts, and presentations also delivered background information and thus were useful in the contextualisation of information. The actual analysis procedure or coding then took place following the techniques of grounded theory described above. Thus, coding involved both newly developed codes and codes that emerged in the analysis of the interviews. However, document analysis also requires that the researcher regards and includes the characteristics of the documents. It is important to consider the context in which the document was written or published, its original purpose, and its target audience (Bowen 2009: 33–34). Consequently, I indicated the coded passages with a link to the document to remind myself of its source and so be able to use the data appropriately. I argue that different forms of data require differing treatments in developing overall research findings. Being aware of issues such as the origin, purpose, and the source of data is thus crucial to producing transparent and comprehensible arguments that can strive for objectivity effectively. In my opinion, this enables the concurrent use of data that are collected through different data collection methods within one thesis.

5 Findings and paper summaries

In this chapter, I explain how the three papers together form a coherent whole and provide insight into second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of a belonging that spans geographical boundaries. I reflect on the subquestions set out in Chapter 1.1, which the research papers address in different ways. The first two papers unveil various localities, in Eritrea (Paper I) and in Switzerland (Paper II). The papers show the importance of both experiences and encounters at these localities and their socio-spatial interconnections. They do so by recounting various narratives, stories, and memories linked with the translocal experiences and encounters that influence the formation of second-generation Eritreans' sense of belonging. For instance, the individual papers identify the influence of memories attached to localities brought back through the journeys to Eritrea (Paper I), encountering narratives and discourses about the new generation of Eritreans in Switzerland (Paper II) and the generational transmission of narratives, stories and knowledge about the Eritrean past (Paper III). Further, all three papers show that such translocal experiences and encounters do not influence all second-generation Eritreans in the same manner, so their effect on the second-generation Eritreans' identity and sense of belonging differ from individual to individual.

The second part of this chapter provides summaries of the individual scientific papers; each contains a brief overview of the topic of each article, its aims, and its results. The papers can be read in full in Part II.

5.1 Key findings

The three research papers collectively illustrate how second-generation Eritreans negotiate their belonging in settings that span geographical boundaries. The translocal interrelations between people and places examined in the papers emphasise how different socio-spatial contexts influence this negotiation. As a result of the transnational settings in which second-generation individuals generally grow up, such contexts are diverse and transcend international boundaries (see Chapter 3.4). Each paper presents a context that contains various localities and socio-spatial interconnections to which second-generation Eritreans living in Switzerland may or even must relate and thus highlights the role of localities and contexts in the process of their identity formation.

- Paper I discusses the diaspora tourism of second-generation Eritreans in Eritrea. It elucidates how second-generation Eritreans encounter localities that are intertwined with specific people and collectives in Eritrea and how these experiences affect the second-generation visitors' sense of belonging. It then demonstrates that the socio-spatial interconnections provide specific localities with particular senses of place that influence the sense of

belonging in different ways. Thus, it indicates the importance of such socio-spatially interconnected experiences to the visitors' constitution of belonging. Against this background, diaspora tourism may be understood as a translocal practice through which individuals experience various socio-spatially interconnected settings spanning national borders. Thus, the combination of diaspora tourism and translocality may uncover how post-migrant individuals may form and negotiate their sense of belonging by experiencing various socio-spatially interconnected contexts.

- Paper II emphasises Switzerland as the macro context and addresses the encounters of second-generation Eritreans with a growing new generation of Eritrean immigrants in Switzerland. It illustrates how new immigrants from the same origin change the diaspora and the translocal field and thus create new frames of reference for the renegotiation of belonging and collective identity. Besides considering personal encounters at various spatial places, the article examines public discourse about the new Eritrean immigrants in Switzerland, since this is a locality to which second-generation Eritreans relate and constitute their sense of belonging. Hence, new immigrants from the same origin reshape the translocal sphere and thus present an important new actor in the identity formation of those born and/or raised in the diaspora. The concept of encounters may reveal how second-generation individuals experience changes within the translocal field and how these affect their negotiation of belonging and their positioning in these changing contexts.
- Paper III addresses the promotion and maintenance of Eritrean identity through the cross-generational transmission of the Eritrean decisive past[15] and illustrates it by two exemplary cases: first from parents to children or in some other way in the family circle and second through the annual conferences of the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YPFDJ), which are designed for the Eritrean exile youth and organised by a part of it. The paper shows how knowledge, narratives, and views about the Eritrean history is passed on both deliberately and unconsciously to the succeeding generation. The article indicates the importance of narratives, stories, and memories about the decisive moments or events in history of the ancestral home country on the second-generations' identity formation and their development of a sense of belonging and examines how such accounts are transmitted.

[15] I use the term 'decisive past' to refer to all the decisive moments in Eritrean history related to national identity. The Eritrean past is characterised by a plethora of decisive historical events. Paper III shows how together these form the Eritrean "chosen trauma", which constitutes one component of a large-group identity (see Paper III Chapter 4). Hence, I use the decisive past or the decisive Eritrean past to mean the entirety of moments in Eritrean history that are decisive for Eritrean national identity.

As a whole, the three papers thus present a range of socio-spatial contexts and a variety of localities in which second-generation Eritreans grow up. They identify the important role of such localities in the formation of identity and the negotiation of belonging. The collection demonstrates the situatedness of second-generation individuals in the transnational field, and observes how localities play important roles in their formation of identity and their negotiation of belonging. Using the concept of translocality thus ensures that context, locally grounded experiences and practices, and relations to various localities and socio-spatial interconnections are all taken into consideration when examining the formation of a sense of belonging.

5.2 Paper summaries

Paper I: Second-generation Eritreans' journeys to Eritrea

Graf, S. (2017): Diaspora tourism and the negotiation of belonging: journeys of young second-generation Eritreans to Eritrea. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 40*(15), 2710–2727. doi: 10.1080/01419870.2016.1262542

This paper discusses how the journeys of second-generation Eritreans to their ancestral home country influence their negotiation of belonging and the effect of such journeys on their relations to their ancestral home. The paper identifies various localities within Eritrea and shows how interaction with locations influences second-generation Eritreans in their belonging, affiliations, and positionality towards Eritrea.

Based on a case study, the paper identifies two types of locality. The first of these are places that are linked to local families: family homes, neighbourhoods, villages, and towns. They generally evoke feelings of home and belonging and make the visitors feel Eritrean. Nevertheless, the same localities may also cause feelings of strangeness as individuals are reminded that they were born and raised abroad. Thus, such localities entail deliberations about belonging to both Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora. Second, the paper identifies places linked to encounters with other visitors from the diaspora, such as nightclubs, hotels, and public places in Eritrea's capital Asmara. These findings correlate with Conrad's: experiencing such localities make "youngsters aware that something like an Eritrean 'exile' or 'diaspora culture' in its own right exists at all" (Conrad 2010: 100). Such experiences may again raise awareness of both similarities and differences with other diaspora Eritreans. In addition, the article reveals that encountering and experiencing various localities and the socio-spatial interconnections entail reflections about local realities on the ground and thus provoke deliberations about Eritrea at large. Furthermore, the paper found that the lack of expected socio-spatial interrelations, such as the absence of specific people from specific places, may evoke thoughts about the reasons for this and give rise to particular attitudes towards Eritrea. In sum, the paper found that experiencing such socio-spatial interconnections gives rise to reflections and interpretations about sameness and otherness. The socio-spatial interrelations provide locations with a particular meaning and evoke a "sense of

place" (Cresswell 2004) and thus elicit feelings of belongings and non-belongings to both Eritrea and the diaspora. Diaspora tourism thus constitutes a means to directly and actively experience such localities and their concomitant socio-spatial interrelations, and it is therefore an important practice through which second-generation Eritreans may negotiate their sense of belonging.

Paper II: Second-generation Eritreans' encounters with the new generation of refugees from Eritrea

Graf, S. & Thieme, S. (2016): 'We look similar and have the same geographical origin': translocal encounters of second-generation Eritreans with a new generation of refugees from Eritrea. *Geographica Helvetica, 71*, 578–600. doi: 10.5194/gh-71-331-2016

This paper emphasises the influence of new immigrants from Eritrea on the Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora regarding their Eritrean identity, their affiliation towards Eritrea, and their positioning in the changing translocal social field. The new arrivals both create and constitute new frames of reference for negotiating and renegotiating identity and affiliation to Eritrea as well as the Eritrean diaspora for second-generation Eritreans.

The research paper finds that encounters with the new Eritrean immigrants evoke deliberations about identity and affiliations. Encounters between the two groups are of two main types: First, face-to-face encounters with individuals and second, encountering the new generation as a collective in a discourse. Both types of encounter make second-generation Eritreans aware of Eritrean characteristics, values, features, culture, and even visual physical attributes that they may or may not share. In addition to the second-generation Eritreans' own deliberations and perceptions about sameness and otherness, the newcomers' conduct towards the second generation and how they approach and contact them constitutes an important influence on the second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of identity. Furthermore, the second-generation Eritreans' assumptions of how the newcomers will perceive them leads them to reconsider their commonalities and distinctions. In addition, the increasing arrival of new Eritreans in Switzerland means that the second-generation Eritreans also encounter them as a group in a discourse. As this discourse is rather negatively biased, they generally distance themselves from it. However, the explanatory narratives of the second-generation Eritreans reveal that they do not associate these negative images with Eritrean culture and identity but with diverse causes such as personal live stories, flight experiences or the difficult conditions for migrants to stay in Switzerland and to integrate in its society. In sum, encountering the new-generation Eritreans both personally and as a group in a discourse provoke deliberations about Eritrean features, characteristics, culture, and identity and thus may present crucial moments in the process of identity formation.

Research paper III: Generational transmission of the decisive Eritrean past

Graf, S. (2018): Politics of belonging and the Eritrean diaspora youth: Generational transmission of the decisive past. *Geoforum, 92*, 117–124. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.04.009.

This research paper addresses the cross-generational transmission of the decisive Eritrean past (see footnote 15). It reveals the past's influence on the constitution, reinforcement, and preservation of Eritrean identity and sense of belonging in Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora. The paper illustrates two transmission paths: first, within the families, mainly from parents to their children, since parents play a chief role in teaching and conveying Eritrean values and culture to their descendants (Zerat 2009: 67), and second, the international annual conferences of the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YPFDJ). Through the YPFDJ, the Eritrean leadership aims to foster relations between Eritrea and the Eritrean exile youth, and their conferences are thus interesting and important yet less discussed forums for promoting and maintaining these links.

The transmission and maintenance of narratives and knowledge about Eritrean history and its decisive historical moments help foster national Eritrean identity amongst the second generation. The process may involve both awareness of Eritrean history and personal and familial stories involved with this. These narratives are not only of victimhood but also of heroism and are primarily linked with the nation-building process and the struggle for independence. Within families, children learn about of the Eritrean decisive past from their parents' narrations and experiences and their engagement with and commitment to Eritrea. At YPFDJ conferences, the Eritrean diaspora youth learn about Eritrean history, the nation-building process, and its links with the formation of an Eritrean national identity. It imparts and maintains what appears to be the dominant narrative of Eritrean nationalism and identity to the second generation. Hence, the decisive Eritrean past constitutes an important vehicle by which the dominant narrative of Eritrean nationalism and Eritrean identity is transmitted to and maintained amongst the second generation. It presents a discursive construction that reproduces the boundaries of belonging to Eritrea and the Eritrean nation. Furthermore, this transmission may be both an unconscious process and a concrete and consciously promoted political project.

6 Conclusion and outlook

This research project was inspired by the growth of the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland and the lack of knowledge about it. This thesis focuses on Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora, a group that has so far received little attention in studies on the Eritrean diaspora. The specific research interest has arisen from the question of how people of Eritrean origin who were born and/or raised in the diaspora negotiate their belonging and positioning towards a country that is currently one of the largest source countries of refugees in both absolute and relative terms (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2014b: 29–33) and thus attracts close international observation. This thesis examines the way in which this second generation constitute their identity and sense of belonging in a sensitive and contentious context that spans geographical boundaries. To examine identity formation in a multi-local context of mobility and migration, I have conceptualised the negotiation of identity and belonging of second-generation individuals as a process involving socio-spatial interrelated contexts and translocally situated everyday experiences and encounters. By analysing the locally grounded connections of individuals, objects, narratives, and ideas, this thesis demonstrates the benefits of incorporating socio-spatial interrelated contexts and their accompanying locally grounded experiences into studies of identity and belonging in post-migrant generations.

Second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging: Experiencing translocalities

One core research question of this project was how second-generation Eritreans living in Switzerland constitute their affiliations, relations, and sense of belonging to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora and how they negotiate their Eritrean identity in today's translocal field. The study finds that localities and socio-spatial interconnections are fundamental to this process. Such localities may be found both in Eritrea and in the diaspora, including in Switzerland. The thesis demonstrates that specific places and their socio-spatially interrelated contexts are important. These are locations on a local scale that second-generation Eritreans may occupy, visit, or encounter in any way. The thesis also demonstrates the relevance of experiences and encounters. It shows that the actual experiencing of such localities and their socio-spatial interconnections are of major importance. Experiencing the links of specific places with specific individuals or groups of people is important for second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging. This applies not only to existing socio-spatial interconnections that are found locally, but also to those that second-generation Eritreans expect or suspect but cannot find. Hence, the thesis finds that both experiencing socio-spatial contexts and the non-experience of such interrelations strongly influence second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of affiliations, positioning, and sense of (non-)belonging. Furthermore, this thesis shows that such local experiences confront the second-

generation Eritreans with the actual conditions on the ground. Experiencing these conditions raises considerations about local realities and perceived developments both in Eritrea and in the diaspora and the reasons for these. In this context, the research reveals that translocal experiences entail deliberations about local realities and perceived developments, and these in turn influence second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging and identity and their positioning towards both Eritrea and the diaspora.

The academic papers of this thesis identify various localities that influence the second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging. However, their specific foci allow them to indicate only a selection of localities and socio-spatial contexts; they do not and could not present an exhaustive account. In Eritrea, such localities are usually very specific places that are either connected with meeting and visiting local relatives and family or with other individuals of the Eritrean diaspora. Furthermore, the absence of expected individuals or social groups from particular locations in Eritrea also contributes to the negotiation of belonging. In Switzerland, such localities are mainly public places where the second generation encounters the new generation of Eritrean refugees. Additionally, the public discourse about Eritreans in Switzerland is another locality that influences second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of identity and belonging. Accordingly, this thesis shows that localities should not only be considered as spatial entities in a physical sense but also in more abstract forms of socio-spatial interconnection. The transmission of narratives about the Eritrean past in family circles and YPFDJ conferences are further socio-spatial contexts that influence second-generation Eritreans' sense of belonging. Thus, the thesis shows that locally grounded experiences at specific locations disclose, highlight, and visualise elements that lead second-generation Eritreans to think about their identity and sense of belonging. Hence, the study demonstrates that localities and other socio-spatial experiences are crucial to second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging and identity.

These findings on the importance of experiencing localities on second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging coincide with prior research, particularly that of Conrad (2006a; 2010) and Tecle (2012), but they also add new insights. These two scholars reveal how various experiences during the second-generation Eritreans' journeys may "force them to re-negotiate their sense of belonging" (Conrad 2006a: 5). However, this study demonstrates that diverse localities and socio-spatial contexts in both the country of residence and the diaspora lead second-generation Eritreans to negotiate their identity and their sense of belonging. Further, Conrad observes that second-generation Eritreans generally experience alienation and rejection in Eritrea that tend to evoke feelings of non-belonging (Conrad 2006a: 14). Although this study discovers various socio-spatial experiences that provoke feelings of otherness too, it also finds that experiencing certain localities in Eritrea, mainly those linked to local families, may contribute to the development of a sense of belonging. Hence, this study shows that experiencing localities may evoke both feelings of nonbelonging and of belonging. Furthermore, Conrad finds "that the journeys to Eritrea make most

youngsters aware that something like an Eritrean 'exile' or 'diaspora culture' in its own right exists" (Conrad 2010: 100). Similarly, this research project shows that experiencing localities and socio-spatial contexts affect the sense of belonging or nonbelonging to both Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora. However, this thesis finds that experiencing localities and encountering the Eritrean diaspora in Eritrea does not merely draw attention to the existence of an Eritrean diaspora culture; it also prompts a differentiated negotiation of belonging and positioning to the Eritrean diaspora.

To sum up, this thesis finds that localities, whether physical or socially constructed, are particularly important for second-generation individuals in the constitution and negotiation of identity and belonging in transnational contexts that international borders. The central insight is the interrelation of places with specific individuals or groups of people. It is this socio-spatial interconnectedness that leads second-generation Eritreans to deliberate on belonging and identity. The study also shows that direct, real, and concrete experience of places and their socio-spatial interconnectedness causes second-generation individuals to reflect on their own identity and belonging. The findings of this thesis, however, do not allow a general conclusion about the second-generation Eritreans' belonging, non-belonging, or identity. The underlying epistemological position leads to an understanding of identity and belonging as constructed by individuals (see Chapter 1.2). It is for this reason that the methodological approach examined individual perceptions and perspectives. Hence, the effects of experiences on the second-generation Eritreans' identity and sense of belonging differ individually. As such experiences are subjective, they neither influence all second-generation Eritreans in the same manner, nor do they simply evoke *either* belonging *or* non-belonging to Eritrea or its diaspora. This demonstrates that the Eritrea diaspora as a whole (see Chapter 2) and the second-generation Eritreans are by no means homogenous groups but diverse and heterogeneous. Further, belonging is not understood as a fixed entity but as an ongoing process in a constant state of flux (see Chapter 3.1). Similarly, the thesis shows localities and socio-spatial interconnections to be dynamic and in transition. As a consequence, this thesis allows generalised statements on negotiating belonging and identity but not on the outcome, the identity and sense of belonging of second-generation Eritreans in general.

Negotiation of identity and belonging of post-migrant individuals: Methodological and conceptual approach

The second research question of this project set out to explore how the second-generation individuals' negotiation of identity and belonging may be approached methodologically and conceptually. This study argues that applying a "translocal perspective enables an examination of identity formation that transcends geographical boundaries by taking into account the complex nature of socio-spatial processes and interconnections" (Graf and Thieme 2016: 333). It shows that translocality serves as an apt conceptual frame for analysing identity formation and the negotiation of belonging

in transnational environments. The concept places particular emphasis on 'the local' by considering and including contexts and so enables the investigation of a rather elusive process in a grounded manner. However, the research results indicate that the concept's focus on 'the local' does not confine the analysis of belonging and identity to a local level. In fact, focussing on the local makes it possible to explain the process of negotiating identity and sense of belonging on a larger scale. This groundedness of translocality is especially fundamental to the negotiation of belonging of second-generation individuals, who generally find themselves both between and enrooted in two countries at the same time. The academic papers comprising the central components of this thesis illustrate that second-generation individuals' references are grounded, as they are linked to various specific places. Hence, translocality overcomes the difficulties of examining identity and belonging in a transnational social space by paying attention to various local socio-spatial contexts and interconnections. The empirical findings of this research project thus reveal that translocality appears to be eligible for the study of identity and belonging of the second generation and others and further provide a firm argument for the consideration of experiences and encounters. By focusing on translocalities, contexts and socio-spatial interconnectedness in combination with experiences and encounters, this research projects presents a potential conceptual approach to examine second-generation individuals' identity formation. Such a conceptual frame offers an appropriate analytical framework to study identity and belonging of post-migrant individuals in transnational yet grounded social spaces. Hence, I argue that the study of identity and belonging especially in transnational settings that span international boundaries needs to pay attention to the local and to experiences of localities and their socio-spatial contexts.

Methodologically, such a conceptual framework requires a multi-sited research approach to enable the consideration of translocalities. Such an approach then allows to discover important localities and to study second-generation individuals' experiences with these that influence their negotiation of belonging and identity.

Outlook and further research

This research project contributes to the body of research on young diaspora Eritreans. Nevertheless, various aspects and processes remain unexplored and require further research. The study provides insights into the process by which second-generation Eritreans negotiate belonging, yet it does not allow a clear or general statement of their actual belonging to Eritrea and its diaspora. Furthermore, a central yet unaddressed question relates to the active involvement of second-generation Eritreans in their ancestral home country. Due to the rather large size of the Eritrean diaspora, the exile born and/or raised youth may present important actors for Eritrea in the future. Thus, further research is needed into how second-generation Eritreans participate in developments in Eritrea. Such research should also consider the children of Eritrean parents who have left Eritrea only recently. Due to the large number of new Eritrean refugees, these will constitute another important sub-group within the Eritrean diaspora

in the near future. It will be interesting to see how they negotiate their sense of belonging and identity towards both Eritrea and the diaspora and how they participate in the country's development. Future research could provide information on whether and to what extent the parents' different reasons for leaving Eritrea (see Chapter 2.1) have any influence on their children's relationships towards their parents' country of origin. Additional research on this particular group then might shed further light on the maintenance of Eritrean identity and nationalism amongst the diaspora youth. Besides, it could uncover whether and how the transmission of Eritrean identity, as portrayed in Paper III, persists amongst children of the recently arrived Eritreans too. Additionally, the children of the second-generation Eritreans discussed in this thesis would be an interesting group with which to compare attitudes. The question arises to what extent the strong ties of the first generation remain in the second and third generations and in what form Eritrean identity endures. Ties, localities, and chances to experience socio-spatial contexts that promote belongingness to Eritrea will change. The direct link to influential contexts in Eritrea such as local relatives, as presented in Paper I (see Graf 2017), seems likely to decrease from generation to generation. Further research on the second and third generations might reveal to what extent the dominant narrative of Eritrean identity and nationalism will persist and in what way the successive generations of young individuals with Eritrean origin develop, coin or spread new and alternative narratives of Eritreanness and Eritrean identity. Another feature of interest in the second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of identity and belonging is their integration and their general everyday lives in their countries of residence. Although Zerat (2009), Hassan (2008), and Paper II of this research project (see Graf and Thieme 2016) provide some insights into this topic, it remains rather under-researched. Thus, further study is needed on the second-generation Eritreans, their relations with their country of residence, and how these relations then influence their identity and sense of belonging.

Other case studies beyond the Eritrean diaspora might identify additional translocalities and contexts. Such new insights may contribute to an overall and holistic picture of the translocal negotiation of belonging of post-migrant generations. Furthermore, various statements and observations in the course of this research have raised the question of the extent to which the experience of natural spaces, landscapes, and similar phenomena in the ancestral home country can evoke a sense of belonging in post-migrant generations. Such findings could make a real contribution to our understanding of second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging to Eritrea and of post-migrants' negotiation of belonging to their ancestral home countries generally.

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PART II
Scientific Papers

Paper I:
Second-generation Eritreans' journeys to Eritrea

Graf, S. (2017).
Diaspora tourism and the negotiation of belonging: journeys of young second-generation Eritreans to Eritrea.
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Diaspora tourism and the negotiation of belonging: Journeys of young second-generation Eritreans to Eritrea[16]

Abstract: In this article, I address the diaspora tourism of children of migrants. Based on a case study of second-generation Eritreans, I reveal how journeys to parents' home countries affect the sense of belonging of the second generation. Applying a translocal perspective, I understand diaspora tourism as a translocal phenomenon which is both based on and creates interconnectedness between individuals and places. I illustrate different locally grounded situations and the socio-spatial interconnectedness that second-generation Eritreans experience at various places in the course of their journey in Eritrea. I conclude that diaspora tourism and the associated experiences at the places visited represent crucial identity-establishing events for second-generation Eritreans and influence the negotiation of their belonging and positioning towards both Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora. This paper contributes to the debate on second generation and belonging by focusing on how localities and socio-spatial interconnectedness affect the negotiation of second-generation Eritreans' belonging.

Keywords: Translocality; second generation; belonging; diaspora tourism; Eritrea, visiting friends and relatives

Introduction

Although the majority of refugees in 2014 emanated from Syria and Afghanistan, Eritrea plays a prominent role in contemporary refugee and asylum debates. The UN estimates that more than 4,000 Eritreans left their country every month in 2012, and Eritrea today constitutes one of the largest source countries of refugees in both absolute and relative terms (UNHCR 2014, 29–33). Since the turn of the millennium, Eritreans have left their country due to 'intensified political repression and militarization' (Tecle & Goldring 2013, 194). Today, the compulsory and open-ended national service for both women and men constitutes the prime reason to flee the country (cf. Bozzini 2011b; Kibreab 2013). Although refugee flows from Eritrea date back to the 1960s, the reasons for fleeing differ greatly. Up to one million Eritreans found themselves forced to leave their country due to the struggle for independence between 1961 and 1991 (Hepner 2008, 477; HRW 2009, 12; Schmitz-Pranghe 2010, 5). Thus, the Eritrean diaspora consists largely of two generations of arrivals: the old generation that escaped from the struggle for independence and the new generation that flees from the authoritarian Eritrean state. The focus of this study is on the children of the old generation of arrivals, the second-generation Eritreans.

During the 30-year struggle for independence, Eritrean nationalism arose, entailing close relations between the diaspora and Eritrea. Through its transnational economic

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and political support, the Eritrean diaspora played a vital role in the independence struggle and the subsequent development of Eritrea (cf. Bernal 2006; Conrad 2006; Hepner 2003). Yet, this 'long-distance nationalism' (Anderson 1992) not only developed spontaneously among diaspora members but also was promoted or enforced by the Eritrean liberation fronts and is maintained to this day by the independent Eritrean state (Al-ali et al. 2001; Hepner 2008, 2009; Glatthard 2012). An example of such a transnational interlink was the annually held Bologna Festival[1] organized by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front EPFL. The festival was intended to foster the link between the exiles and their home, to promote Eritrean nationalism, enable the diaspora Eritreans to celebrate their culture and also to function as a kind of 'wedding market' amongst diaspora members (Andall 2002, 396–397; Arnone 2008, 332; Bozzini 2011a, 67; Conrad 2010, 54). The next generation of Eritreans that was born and grew up in this transnational context has generally developed a national consciousness (Zerat 2009, 67). Yet, today the dynamics of Eritrean nationalism and identity are much more blurred, and new means exist, such as cyberspace, by which Eritreans may debate and revise 'the national narrative' (Bernal 2014, 3). Other opportunities for second-generation Eritreans to engage with their roots, their affinity to Eritrea, and their 'Eritrean-ness' are presented by journeys to Eritrea. A few studies have discussed journeys of Eritrean youths born and/or raised in the diaspora (cf. Arnone 2011; Conrad 2003, 2006, 2010; Tecle 2012). Their authors focus on how visiting Eritrea may influence 'Eritrean-ness' and identity and discuss the role of the Eritrean state and its attempts 'to institutionalize belonging among young Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora' (Tecle 2012, 44). A prominent example that combines the state's effort with visiting Eritrea is the Know-Your-Country-Tour *[Zura nHagerka]*. Conrad reveals how second-generation Eritreans who take the tour learn about their country of origin and its history (Conrad 2006, 2010). Further, both Conrad and Tecle depict 'intra-generational conflicts' (Tecle 2012, 44) between the second-generation Eritreans and their peers who live in Eritrea. Unequal treatment due to Eritrea's policy of graduated citizenship, which frees diaspora Eritreans of many of the citizenship duties that Eritreans in Eritrea have to fulfil, may fuel resentments against diaspora Eritreans (Riggan 2013, 87). Such experiences of being disapproved by Eritreans 'force them [the second-generation Eritreans] to re-negotiate their sense of belonging' (Conrad 2006, 5).

The aim of this paper is to uncover the 'socio-spatial interconnectedness' (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013) and experiences of diaspora tourism and to show how these may affect second-generation Eritreans' sense of belonging and home. Particular focus is laid on visiting local Eritrean as well as diaspora friends and relatives, a central aspect of the second-generation Eritreans' journeys that has received rather little attention. The central question is this: How do journeys to Eritrea influence second-generation Eritreans, and how do they affect their sense of belonging to Eritrea and their positioning within the translocal social field? Shedding light on the negotiation of belonging by second-generation Eritreans through journeys to Eritrea may contribute

to the debate on their long-distance nationalism, their Eritrean identity, and their stance towards the Eritrean state.

Methodology

I draw my empirical material from participant observation (Spradley 1980, 53–62) and interviews. In the summer of 2014, I accompanied a handful of young diaspora-born Eritrean women and men, all in their twenties, on a trip to Eritrea. The journey took 25 days and involved several family visits to various towns and villages as well as a trip to Massawa on the Red Sea coast to enjoy some holiday feeling. Besides experiencing one specific journey to Eritrea, I gained insights into the journeys of other second-generation Eritreans. During the trip, I noted my experiences, the talks and discussions I attended, and my observations as precisely as possible in a field diary (Spradley 1980, 69–72). As a result of this data collection strategy, my field notes mainly take the form of indirect speech in a rather descriptive manner. Additional data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and casual discussions with sixteen second-generation Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora[2]. The interviews were conducted between October 2013 and July 2015 in all parts of Switzerland. Discussions with various second-generation visitors in Eritrea and interviews in Switzerland provided additional data on journeys to Eritrea and served to contextualize the observations from the field trip. This ensured that the coverage of data and the findings reach beyond the journey I accompanied.

I adopted a purposeful sampling strategy for data collection in order to select information-rich cases that provide in-depth insight regarding the research question (cf. Patton 1990), namely journeys to Eritrea and family visits. Additionally to the group I accompanied, the sample includes ten women and six men, whom I selected through mutual social contacts, institutions, and other interviewees. Participants had to exhibit two characteristics: First, they had to be children of the old refugee generation that left Eritrea before the millennium because of the war. Since Eritreans who settled in Switzerland at that time are mainly ethnic Tigrinya (Glatthard 2012, 51), the majority of the participants are Tigrinya. Second, they might have been born in Eritrea, but they had to have grown up and undergone the major part of their socialization in the diaspora. Hence, I use the term *second generation* for individuals who are either born or principally raised in the diaspora[3]. In order to ensure the anonymity of all the research participants, I do not provide additional information on participants and interviews. Second-generation Eritreans in Switzerland are a rather small group, and individuals might easily become identifiable. Further, I use pseudonyms when quoting interviews or citing statements from the field trip.

Diaspora tourism: a socio-social practice in translocal space

This paper is intended to contribute to the broader debate on belonging in the post-migrant generation by applying a translocal perspective. Belonging involves ‘the desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places or modes of being’ (Probyn

1996, 19). Thus, it has not only a social dimension but also a spatial one. According to Agnew, places are fixed or mobile locations that have a real material or imaginary form and further possess a 'sense of place', which is the emotional and subjective attachment individuals have to it (Cresswell 2004, 7). Thus, a sense of place may give rise to reflections and interpretations of rootedness and heritage and so provides attachments to certain locations. Places that affect humans' sense of belonging are those in which people feel comfortable or at home. Such places are found at various scales, such as the domestic, the local, the regional, the national, and even the supranational levels (Rose 1995, 88–91). These may be neighbourhoods, villages, regions, nation-states, or even larger entities. Direct personal interaction with these may bring about the negotiation of allegiances (Gustafson 2009, 492).

For migrants and their descendants, belonging depends on multiple places at multiple scales (Zontini 2015, 338). Diaspora tourism[4] provides an opportunity for individuals with migration backgrounds to directly experience the localities of their ancestral homes and so engage with their origin (cf. Basu 2004; Butler 2003; Coles & Timothy 2004; Newland & Taylor 2010; Williams & Hall 2000). Amongst various aspects, such journeys involve visits to friends and relatives. Several studies on identity and belonging of migrants' children depict diaspora tourism including visiting friends and relatives as important transnational practices by which individuals of the second generation maintain transnational ties. They also show that the journeys may both strengthen the attachment to ancestral home countries and foster feelings of difference and exclusion (cf. Reynolds 2010; Haller & Landolt 2005; Ruting 2012; Ali & Holden 2006; Wagner 2008). Visiting ancestral home countries and experiencing the transnational social field provokes reflections of one's personal biography and challenges second-generation individuals to examine who they are or where they belong (Ueda 2009, 148–152). Yet, King and Christou describe second-generation individuals expressing 'feelings of being at home' in a range of places that go beyond national borders (King & Christou 2010, 115). Hence, I take the view that journeys to the parental home country may be understood as a trans*local* practice.

Building on transnationalism, translocality reintegrates place to overcome the rather deterritorialized notion of transnationalism (Brickell & Datta 2011, 8–9). Like transnationalism, the concept draws attention to mobility and concomitant aspects, though 'without losing sight of the importance of localities in peoples' lives' (Oakes & Schein 2006, 1). Translocality thus focuses on the locally grounded experiences of individuals who find themselves living in different places. As experiences and practices are events that influence individuals' feelings about belonging (Anthias 2006, 21), translocal experiences such as encountering 'otherness' may produce opinions regarding attachments and affinities (Brickell & Datta 2011, 16). Journeys to one's heritage are not only motivated by 'a sense of belonging to or identifying with a way of life' (King 1994, 174) but also shape and form it anew. Hence, visiting friends and relatives represents a translocal activity through which the children of migrants may negotiate and frame their affinity to their ancestral home country. Translocality may

thus be understood as the concept that explains how sense of place is socially constructed yet simultaneously incorporates the locations themselves.

Adopting a translocal lens to study how children of migrants constitute their sense of belonging by journeys to their parents' home countries reveals how socio-spatial interconnections affect negotiations of their belonging. By addressing the interconnectedness between localities and people at various levels, translocality serves as an appropriate conceptual tool to understand the negotiation of belonging in multi-place and multi-scale environments. It enables the exploration of how social aspects, places and the interconnection between the two affect the sense of belonging.

Second-generation Eritreans visiting Eritrea

Second-generation Eritreans have limited interactions with Eritrea (Zerat 2009, 67), so journeys to Eritrea present one way of engaging with their origins. However, travelling to Eritrea seems to be restricted to specific second-generation Eritreans. Glatthard points out that it is mainly those who are loyal to the regime who have the option of travelling to Eritrea (Glatthard 2012, 54). Alike, interviewees who have openly criticized the Eritrean regime stated that they can no longer obtain entry visas or fear possible consequences if travelling to Eritrea. However, my observations from the journey to Eritrea showed that many of the second-generation Eritreans travelling there would describe themselves as apolitical. Thus, only second-generation Eritreans who are known critics of the government do not travel to Eritrea.

The journey I accompanied started in Switzerland and took us via Italy to Eritrea. Even during the journey it became clear that this would be more than just an ordinary holiday trip for the second-generation Eritreans.

> At the airport in Rome Daniel stated that he would like to go on holidays after this. One of his fellow travellers replied: 'We're just going to holidays to Eritrea', but Daniel answered that this would not be real holidays, except perhaps the trip to Massawa, the town at the Red Sea Coast. He meant going somewhere he had never been to before, like two of the group members who would travel from Eritrea to Asia without returning to Switzerland first. (Field notes 2014)

That the journey is not associated with holidays but rather with visiting the ancestral home became apparent in a range of situations during the trip. The second-generation Eritreans, for instance, passed the passport controls either with their Swiss passport combined with their Eritrean identity card, the *tessera*, serving as visa, or with their Eritrean passport. Although they understand passports purely as a travel document not affecting their identity as Eritrean or Swiss, traveling without a visa to a country that requires visas for non-nationals emphasized to them their Eritrean nationality (Field notes 2014). Thus, it made them aware that they were traveling to a country to which they belong in some way.

The individual journeys of second-generation Eritreans in Eritrea do not merely follow a similar scheme; they usually also involve several identical activities, such as visiting friends and relatives or, if possible, spending some days at the Red Sea. Visiting friends and relatives in the Eritrean context is also specific because it is not limited to those living in Eritrea but also includes visiting diaspora Eritreans who have travelled to Eritrea themselves.

Visiting local Eritrean relatives

Visiting friends and relatives who live in Eritrea presents an important, unavoidable, and distinct part of all second-generation Eritreans' journeys, which may influence their sense of belonging and their affiliation to Eritrea. Although such journeys may be motivated by the desire to connect to the ancestral home 'through reviving relationships with family members' (Wagner 2008, 196), studies show that post-migrant generations may also feel obliged to visit relatives or family members who have re-migrated to the ancestral country (Ali and Holden 2006, 237). Fieldwork revealed that the reality lies somewhere in between.

> As planning progressed, the group started discussing intensively when the best time was to visit their families. Someone emphasized that it is absolutely impossible to arrive and stay in Eritrea for several days or go to Massawa, without seeing one's family first. It would not only be rude; they would also be offended. Everybody agreed that families must be visited as soon as possible, and enough time must be factored in. 'It should not become some simple checking in', one of them said. (Field notes 2014)

> 'I was very often out of town and didn't stay in Asmara all the time. I would say that I spent at least half of my entire trip somewhere else, be it in Keren, Massawa, or the place where my family comes from. So I've been travelling a lot and I have to say I was absolutely into it. It's definitely somewhat exaggerated to put it like this, but it was more a kind of soul-searching for me than just going to Eritrea to hang around doing nothing and messing around. So for me, my trip of course was linked to a kind of longing. I wanted to see and experience things that had something to do with my family, my background, my origins. So in this way, it was not really a duty for me to go and visit my relatives. It was not a compulsory task at all. (…). To have to or not to have to… Well, of course it is a must to visit all of them. But I also really wanted to.' (Selam, interview 2014)

The second-generation Eritreans' motivation ranges from free will and the deliberate desire to grapple with their origins to a perceived social obligation and expectations. All participants described feeling some kind of social or at least familial expectation to visit relatives who live in Eritrea. Several interviewees believe that this is due to the rather distinct sense of community and family amongst Eritreans. In some cases, such

as that of Idris, the pressure is even more explicit, since his parents sometimes ask him to visit his grandparents in Eritrea (Idris, interview 2014). The prospect of visiting relatives in Eritrea, however, may even discourage others from travelling. Several interviewees mentioned feeling uncomfortable about the idea or even being 'scared of the confrontation with the past and the reaction of local relatives' (Winta, interview 2014). However, those participants who travelled also felt an intrinsic motivation to visit locally resident Eritrean relatives and actively become involved with their origin. Kisanet stated that second-generation Eritreans often have an 'identity crisis', mostly during their adolescence, and travel to Eritrea on their quest for belonging (Kisanet, interview 2014). Visiting relatives who live in Eritrea thereby presents an important aspect of this, as Selam's statement above demonstrates. Thus, regardless of the reasons for meeting locally resident families, visiting friends and relatives constitutes an important and unavoidable part of second-generation Eritreans' journeys. But how do they constitute socio-spatial experiences that affect deliberations about belonging and affiliation to Eritrea?

Even though the visitors often meet locally resident family members at the airport, at the hotel or occasionally on the streets of Asmara, visiting relatives entails that second-generation Eritreans visit the families in their homes. These places are often linked to feelings, memories, and emotions.

> 'Last time I was there… That's a very long time ago, I think I was 12. (…). I have pictures, so I know we've been to the countryside and visited some villages. But I have no memories of this at all. For me, the travels were my grandparents. It was just seeing and being with my grandparents. It was just feeling love and playing with them, you know. (…) So these things I still miss. For instance, when I talk to people and they say, "Well, this weekend I'm going to my grandparents". Just to have your family around you and to be grounded. Yeah… I really didn't have those simple moments because we didn't live there. And you saw that other people in Switzerland have those moments and you really wanted them as well. (…) For me, going back home was more to see family and my grandparents. Just being able to find a bit of your identity.' (Yohanna, interview 2014)

Like Yohanna, other interviewees told stories of weddings and other family gatherings that have stuck in their minds. Selam mentioned that it was in Eritrea that she could finally enjoy family gatherings, for example Easter celebrations (Selam, interview 2014). Both Yohanna and Selam stressed that experiencing family, which their Swiss friends were able to do at any time in Switzerland whereas they were not, made them realize that they are not completely 'at home' in Switzerland. Thus, experiencing the presence of family made several second-generation Eritreans aware of the absence of this opportunity in Switzerland and thereby created a sense of home when staying in Eritrea.

Approaching the towns or villages, the neighbourhoods, and finally the relatives' homes often brought back nostalgic feelings and childhood memories. Zerai and Daniel, for instance, greeted locals they knew from previous visits and introduced them to me as 'our neighbours', pointed to places and recalled memories such as 'we always used to play football over there when we were boys,' and explained how things used to be in the earlier days and how they have changed (Field notes 2014). Some second-generation Eritreans mentioned that a conspicuous change in the neighbourhoods was the lack of local peers, as many of them have left the country. Thus, when approaching the families' homes, the visitors normally behaved as if they were entering familiar surroundings.

> We visited Awet's grandmother in a rural area where she lives. On the way, Awet mentioned that it was many years since his last visit. (…) Arriving in the village he asked a young local boy to show us the way to his grandmother's house. Finally reaching her house, he proclaimed: 'This is where I live'.
> (…).
> [On another family visit], he stated 'Good fortune seems to be with me. This could have happened to me. I could have been grown up here' when walking through the neighbourhood towards his relatives' home (Field notes 2014).

Despite Awet's being born, raised and integrated in Switzerland, it seemed that seeing his grandmother's house evoked a certain feeling of home. In addition, his statement at the other neighbourhood, which appeared to be less appealing to him, shows that experiencing the neighbourhood made him aware of his origin and that he belongs to it to some extent. Hence, experiencing the presence of family members attaches feelings and emotions to certain places, and so provides the particular locations with a sense of place that evokes a sense of belonging when staying in Eritrea.

The visits normally follow a similar pattern. In general, everybody seems to be excited and celebrates the visit with lots of food and drinks. All of the second-generation Eritreans who took me to their families said that they felt odd when relatives made a big thing of their visit. Further, they felt uncomfortable being served and eating the relatives' food or awkward not knowing what to talk about at their first visits.

> 'You know, my cousin [a local Eritrean whom we met the very first day] did not accompany me when I went to my uncle's place. So I had to go there by myself. I was feeling rather uncomfortable, since I didn't know what to talk about. I hadn't met this family for a very long time. However, after some small talk it was ok and everything went well', Awet told me after he returned from his first visit. (Field note 2014)

Yet, after some small talk they appeared to lose their initial discomfort. They started to help with daily tasks or playing with the children and so became less a guest and more

a visiting family member. The family visits showed that the older relatives in particular seemed to be delighted to see that the second-generation had not forgotten about their families and their roots.

> While the grandmother was celebrating the coffee ceremony, she held a monolog in Tigrinya addressed to all of them. (…). One of the second-generation Eritreans gave a summary translation: She was 'very happy to see all of them coming back to Eritrea', that they 'did not forget their roots,' and that they came back to 'visit the country from which they originate'. To me, it seemed that she intended to praise the arrival of the second-generation Eritreans with her words. The second-generation Eritreans then replied with a simple 'Amen'. They explained that this answer implies more or less: 'Nicely said, there is nothing much more to add'. (Field notes 2014)

At the families' houses, second-generation Eritreans also encounter objects such as family pictures or martyrs' certificates[5], which hang in almost every Eritrean living room. These seemed to provoke little direct reaction, as they were only explained to me on two visits. Yet they elicit thoughts both about one's genealogy and sometimes on the country's history. Zerai stated that he identifies with Eritrea, a country he has never lived in, rather strongly, because relatives had given their lives for the future generation. This somehow makes him part of that context and belonging to it (Zerai, interview 2014). Thus, the second-generation Eritreans encounter situations, discussions, and a variety of objects through family visits to these localities that may provoke deliberations about roots and their relation to Eritrea and convey a sense of belonging.

Over the course of the stay, relations between local family members and the second-generation Eritreans intensify, and discussions become more personal. In this way, second-generation Eritreans become aware of the difficult local living conditions and the struggles and worries of their local relatives. At the family visits I attended, the current situation in Eritrea and emigration from Eritrea were recurring topics of conversation.

> At lunch they talked openly about the youth leaving the country. It was explained to me that a local relative thought it understandable in some respects. People in Eritrea have to do jobs which they neither want to do nor enjoy and only earn about 500 Nakfa6. Therefore the youth think about leaving Eritrea. (Field notes 2014)

Two participants further mentioned having stayed with their local relatives for a period and taking part in everyday activities such as daily chores and queuing for fuel or commodities. Being confronted with the realities faced by relatives who live in Eritrea appears to affect the second-generation Eritreans emotionally. As a result, the second-generation Eritreans start to empathize with their relatives and normally feel a need to give some money to them. They do not intend to play the role of benefactor, but they feel obliged to because of the discrepancy they witness between their own living

conditions and those of local Eritreans (Selam, interview 2014). Thus, learning about the realities faced by local relatives through discussions or by participating in everyday activities increases empathy for their relatives, strengthens second-generation Eritreans' affiliation to them, and so conveys a feeling of belonging. However, it also makes second-generation Eritreans realize and reflect on their strangeness.

In conclusion, family visits become a core issue in the negotiation of their attachment to Eritrea. Experiencing family attaches emotions, feelings, memories, and relationships to the particular localities and so provides localities with a sense of place. These places may, for instance, be family homes, immediate surrounding and neighbourhoods, or villages and towns. Thus, the interrelation between family and place creates a sense of place that makes second-generation Eritreans feel belonging to those particular places and makes them feel Eritrean. Further, personal interactions with local relatives and experiencing the realities faced by the local relatives create empathy and a sense of belonging. At the same time, experiencing the places and the local living conditions recalls to them that they do not fully belong to Eritrea but also have another home. Thus, visiting families and relatives simultaneously makes second-generation Eritreans aware of their affinity to Eritrea and to their countries of residence.

Meeting diaspora relatives and friends

In the Eritrean context, visiting friends and relatives involves an additional aspect. Besides meeting locally resident family members, the visitors also meet with their relatives and friends from abroad.

> 'We also have relatives in the United States. And when I went to Eritrea for the first time, they happened to be there too. So I was able to organize everything before leaving. And when I arrived at the airport, I saw my cousin for the very first time in my life, as she lives in the US. So instead of flying to New York during the holidays, which I could have done, we met in Asmara.' (Selam, interview 2014)

In contrast to visiting people who are living in Eritrea, which is mainly limited to relatives, meeting with Eritreans from abroad also involves friends and acquaintances who they know from their country of residence or from meetings and events. Opportunities to meet occur at festivals such as the National Youth Festival in Sawa, the military training camp, and the Festival Eritrea in Asmara that replaced the Bologna Festival after independence (Conrad 2010, 66; Radtke 2009, 158; Tesfamichael 2010, 31)[7], which second-generation Eritreans sometimes attend in the course of their journey. Several interviewees stressed that the earlier Bologna Festival evoked attachments to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora.

> ‘The Bologna Festival was something very special. I enjoyed it very much. And I also felt comfortable there. (…) Sure, I missed it when it ended. That feeling of belonging. It was this small subculture. There were Eritreans from Italy, Germany, and England, none of them fully Eritrean or European. Some knew how to speak Tigrinya. Others like me were less proficient. Oh, it was great. That was something we missed. You have common past and similar experiences.’ (Kisanet, interview 2014)

Since independence they are also able to experience such feelings directly in Eritrea. Tarik remembers that ‘the first time the festival took place in Eritrea, was like it used to be in Bologna – only way larger and even more enormous and intense’ (Tarik, interview 2014). Both interviews and observations showed that actual encounters with friends and relatives from abroad in Eritrea influences the second-generation Eritreans’ sense of belonging.

> ‘The first trip to Eritrea was just great. What I remember best is that there were lots of people from the States. They didn’t speak Tigrinya, even though they were of Tigrinya origin. So I realized that I was not a misfit or outsider for not speaking Tigrinya either. And it was really exciting, because all these people were my age and looked and talked like me, listened to the same music I did. (…) It was the first time I realized that there are many different places with a kind of “Eritrean mini-colony”. In Washington, in LA, all over the place. Living the kind of life we did. Far away from Eritrea, but still somehow connected.’ (Selam, interview 2014)

Even though Selam not only refers to diaspora friends and relatives but also to strangers, this statement shows that such interactions may raise awareness of similarities with other diaspora Eritreans. Meeting friends and relatives from abroad who share similar values, attitudes, and ideas may create a feeling of being part of the same group and may make second-generation Eritreans aware of their ‘subgroup or subculture’ (Kisanet, interview 2014). The interaction with other second-generation Eritreans in particular demonstrates that there are other individuals with similar lifestyles who face similar issues and experiences. Several interviewees stressed that meeting other second-generation Eritreans from all over the globe made them realize that they belong to this ‘subgroup’ of foreign-born and/or -raised Eritreans – or at least to a part of it, since they also recognize differences amongst the heterogeneous group of second-generation Eritreans.

Besides meetings that are arranged in advance or at festivals, visiting diaspora Eritreans tends to take place rather randomly at locations where they spend their leisure time. One reason is that the journeys of diaspora Eritreans generally seem to follow similar patterns, and they therefore sojourn at the same places. Over the course of our journey, we often met friends and relatives from abroad on the streets of Asmara, at hotels and restaurants, and at the Red Sea Coast. In addition, second-generation

Eritreans also keep an active lookout for their peers from abroad. Attending a discussion about where to meet other young diaspora Eritreans revealed that nightclubs were one of the best places to do so. Most second-generation Eritreans prefer clubs where there are more diaspora Eritreans than *Asmarinos*, the local people from Asmara. They believe that they have more in common with diaspora peers, such as preferring the same western music or sharing common values and interests, whereas locals would be quite different (Field notes 2014). Further, several interviewees mentioned that some second-generation Eritreans hoped to find a partner at such places. Yet Daniel qualified this by saying that it would be more about just 'having fun', since any potential relationships would be unlikely to last due to the geographical distances involved (Field notes 2014). A famous place to meet other young diaspora Eritreans is the steps in front of St. Joseph's Cathedral on Asmara's main road, *Godena Harnet* (Tecle 2012, 49). Yet I found it largely abandoned in 2014. One likely reason might be that we had arrived rather late in the season, at the beginning of August, and so most visitors from the diaspora would already have left Eritrea. However, the very absence of the diaspora from Eritrea in summer 2014 was a regular topic of conversation among the second-generation Eritreans I accompanied. They repeatedly mentioned the general absence of both locally resident and diaspora Eritreans and that the streets were more deserted than on their previous visits. Reflecting upon reasons for the diaspora's absence, Zerai argued that diaspora Eritreans, and especially second-generation Eritreans, were probably just tired of the entire situation and therefore avoided travelling to Eritrea (Field notes 2014). Interviewees also mentioned that blackouts and fuel shortages have increased and that the infrastructure has worsened, and Tarik stressed that it made him 'sad to see the stagnation or decline that has gone on for several years' (Tarik, interview 2014). Further, the difficult living conditions would be another reason for the absence and emigration of many local Eritreans, interviewees stated. As a result, some interviewees claimed that the government was responsible for this situation, others emphasized its efforts and expressed the need to contribute personally to Eritrea's development, and still others even did both. Thus, experiencing the absence of diaspora Eritreans from places where they normally expected to meet them, makes second-generation Eritreans aware of local realities and entails reflections about Eritrea and their stance towards Eritrea.

Like visiting locally resident families, meeting friends and relatives from abroad is linked with places too. As illustrated, various places are known as locations where young second-generation Eritreans may meet their diaspora peers. The interconnection of localities and people reveals that not only the presence but also the absence of certain groups from places where they normally are found affects second-generation Eritreans regarding the negotiation of their attachment to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora.

Conclusion

This paper explores journeys of second-generation Eritreans to their ancestral home country with a specific focus on visiting friends and relatives. Applying a translocal perspective enables an examination of how second-generation Eritreans experience different localities and how socio-spatial interrelations and the experiences of these at specific places then influence the second-generation Eritreans' sense of belonging. Diaspora tourism and visiting friends and relatives constitute socio-spatial and translocal experiences, which both are based on and create interconnectedness, interactions, and exchanges between individuals and places. These socio-spatial experiences influence the second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of belonging.

Narratives and observations during the field trip and interview statements illustrate how second-generation Eritreans perceive and interpret their journeys and how they experience these socio-spatial interactions themselves. The study shows that different specific localities are linked to specific people. Experiencing these socio-spatial interconnections provokes feelings or memories and so affects second-generation Eritreans' sense of belonging in differing ways. On the one hand, localities are linked to locally resident relatives. Family homes, neighbourhoods, and even Eritrea, on a more abstract level, constitute such places. They are directly connected to experiences and social contacts, such as visiting grandparents, family gatherings or childhood experiences which second-generation Eritreans, unlike peers without migration backgrounds, lack in their countries of residence. This socio-spatial interconnectedness generally promotes a feeling of 'being at home' and so raises awareness of Eritrean origin and a sense of belonging to Eritrea. On the other hand, locations are related to the diaspora. Coles and Timothy (2004, 13) argue that diaspora tourism plays a key role in the construction of a diaspora identity, and Conrad claims 'that the journeys to Eritrea make most youngsters aware that something like an Eritrean "exile" or "diaspora culture" in its own right exists at all' (Conrad 2010, 100). In this line, I found that one of the essential aspects for second-generation Eritreans in this process is encountering the diaspora, which is also related to space. As shown, there are various localities, such as nightclubs, hotels, and public places, at which second-generation Eritreans encounter diaspora peers and identify the Eritrean diaspora, or at least part of it, as an additional frame of reference for negotiating their belonging. In sum, this study indicates that it is neither merely locality nor society but rather the relation of the two that provokes negotiations of belonging. It is the interconnectedness between place and people experienced in the course of journeys to Eritrea that shapes second-generation Eritreans' affiliation to Eritrea and its diaspora. Yet, even though these socio-spatial experiences raise awareness of belonging, it is important to note that they promote consciousness of otherness or strangeness at the same time. In the case of second-generation Eritreans, this is not solely restricted to their attachment to their ancestral home but also to their belonging to the Eritrean diaspora.

In this paper, I have argued that diaspora tourism and concomitant visits to friends and families constitute a translocal phenomenon in which individuals with migration

backgrounds constitute and maintain their affiliation to different locations and negotiate aspects of their belonging. Incorporating a translocality perspective, however, does not imply any denial of the *national* or a sense of belonging towards a country. Moreover, the results indicate that belonging on a larger scale like belonging to a nation may base on the actual experience of respectively the engagement with specific locations and their socio-spatial interrelations.

Notes

1 Scientific literature provides scant explanation why Bologna was chosen for this festival (cf. Arnone 2014). According to a statement published on the website 'Eritrea Live', it was thanks to the prominent communist movement in Bologna, which welcomed and supported Eritreans in their struggle (Plaut 2014).

2 All participants but one live in Switzerland, yet eight grew up in other non-African countries with large Eritrean diasporas. Further, three are children of binational parents. With the exception of the interview with Yohanna, all data were collected in German. Thus, field notes and interviews were recorded in German and translated into English.

3 Since this sample also incorporates people born in Eritrea, strictly speaking the term 'second-generation' is incorrect. There are several subcategories for classifying children of migrants: 1.75 generation (migrated at the age of 0–5), the 1.5 generation (migrated at the age of 6–12) and the 1.25 generation (migrated at the age of 13–17) (cf. Andall 2002, 390–392). However, since all of my interviewees except one belong at least to the 1.75 generation, meaning that they left Eritrea before the age of six, I decided to speak of the 'second-generation'.

4 Various terminologies such as 'diaspora tourism', 'ethnic tourism', 'heritage tourism', 'roots tourism', and others exist for describing the journeys of post-migrant generations to their ancestral homeland. For this study on second-generation Eritreans, 'diaspora tourism' seems to be most suitable, since 'roots tourism' typically involves more distant generations (Ruting 2012, 18), 'ethnic tourism' more frequently describes travel in search of the 'exotic' or strange and indigenous cultures (King 1994, 173), and 'heritage tourism' seems to centres on historical aspects and the desire to consume culture (Chhabra et al. 2003, 702–703). Another conceptual framework that links tourism and migration is 'visiting friends and relatives (VFR tourism)' (Williams & Hall 2000, 20). Yet, as diaspora tourism 'may combine visits to friends and family with conventional tourist or leisure activities' (Newland & Taylor 2010, 6), I treat visiting friends and relatives as an integral part of diaspora tourism.

5 Martyrs' certificates are documents issued to honor the war victims and are therefore a reminder of those who sacrificed themselves for Eritrean independence.

6 At the time of visiting Eritrea, the government exchange rate of is around 1 US Dollar to 15 Nakfa. However, the black-market exchange rates, which reflect the actual value more accurately (Riggan 2014, 103), were slightly above 50 Nakfa to the dollar.

7 The Bologna Festival is no longer held, apart from a 40th-anniversary edition in July 2014. Yet, various other festival or events have been organized, for instance in Frankfurt (Nolting von 2002, 42–43). Fenan, who occasionally attends the festival in Frankfurt, mentioned that he still met people he had known since childhood or from the Bologna Festival (Fenan, interview 2014).

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Paper II:
Encounters of second-generation Eritreans with the new generation of refugees from Eritrea

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"We look similar and have the same geographical origin": translocal encounters of second-generation Eritreans with a new generation of refugees from Eritrea

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Abstract. This article addresses the encounters of second-generation Eritreans with a new generation of refugees from Eritrea in Switzerland and identifies two main types of encounter: direct personal encounters and indirect in the public discourse. It suggests that the recently arrived Eritrean refugees present a new actor within the translocal social field with whom the second-generation Eritreans have to renegotiate their relation. We argue that these encounters frame the second-generation Eritreans' positionality within the translocal social field and influence their identity and their affiliation towards Eritrea and Eritreans. We find that encounters between second-generation Eritreans and new Eritrean arrivals are crucial moments through which second-generation Eritreans form their hybrid identity. Thus, the paper contributes to the debate on identity formation of the second generation by adopting a translocal perspective and provides insights into the diversity in the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland.

1 Introduction

Eritrea has become one of the major source countries of refugees in the world today, for two main reasons: first, the postponement of demobilisation and the undetermined extension of national service, obligatory for all Eritrean women and men as a consequence of the implementation of the *Warsay Yika'alo* Development Campaign in 2002; second, the increasingly repressive measures of the authoritarian Eritrean government, starting with the imprisoning of members of the government demanding reforms and other critics (Bozzini, 2011a:72; Hepner and O'Kane, 2009:xxiv; Kibreab, 2013:2). However, escaping from Eritrea is not a completely new phenomenon. In the wake of the 30-year struggle for independence (1961–1991), more than half a million Eritreans left their country for the countries neighbouring Eritrea, the Middle East, North America, and Europe (Glatthard, 2012:47; Hepner, 2008:176–177; Human Rights Watch, 2009:12).

Thus, there are two generations of Eritrean refugees, and they differ distinctively in their reasons for flight: the old generation that left the country due to the war for independence with Ethiopia, mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, with children born and/or raised abroad; and the new generation of Eritrean refugees, which has been fleeing from the current Eritrean regime since the early 2000s. The two groups have a controversial relationship, as they often link the generation of arrival to political attitudes towards Eritrea. There is a tendency for today's Eritrean refugees, the "generation asylum", to perceive those who migrated during the struggle for independence, the "generation nationalism", as loyal supporters of the Eritrean state, while the "generation nationalism" perceives the asylum seekers fleeing from the regime today as disloyal opponents of the regime (Hepner, 2015 [2009]:187–188). However, Conrad shows that the generation of arrival cannot be straightforwardly equated with political attitudes towards the Eritrean state (see Conrad, 2006b:252), and the same is true for the second generation, as we have learned through our research. Thus, we label the two groups in this paper simply the old generation and the new generation of Eritrean refugees.

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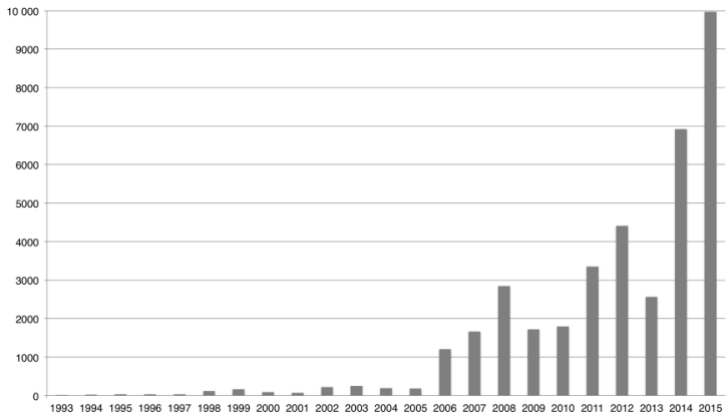

Figure 1. Numbers of Eritrean asylum applications in Switzerland (1993–2015). Data source: State Secretariat for Migration (2016).

Switzerland nowadays constitutes one of the major Western destinations for Eritreans (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012:45). According to the honorary consul of Eritrea in Switzerland, only 1000 to 1200 Eritreans were resident in Switzerland in the 1980s (Interview 2014). However, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland has been growing since 2006 due to the arrival of new Eritrean asylum applicants (see Fig. 1). At that time, the legal situation for Eritrean applicants for asylum changed vastly as a result of a precedent which states that imminent punishment for refusing conscription or desertion from Eritrea is disproportionate and that therefore Eritreans with a well-founded fear of such a punishment are to be recognised as political refugees (Schweizerische Asylrekurskommission, 2006). As a consequence, the acceptance rate increased in 2006, and most Eritrean asylum seekers were granted asylum (Eyer and Schweizer, 2010:41). By the end of 2015, the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland numbered more than 30 000 people (State Secretariat for Migration, 2016; Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2016).

This increase in numbers has led to a growing political and public debate about Eritrean asylum seekers in Switzerland. The public and media-driven discourse is largely characterised by the reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices (see Hepner, 2015 [2009]:188–189).

> 80 per cent of all Eritreans resident in the Canton of Zurich receive social welfare benefit. Their integration remains unsuccessful. (...) The access of the integration commissioners to the Eritrean community has remained difficult, and the authorities are regularly confronted with demanding attitudes and passiveness from the Eritreans (Ellner, 2014, own translation).

This quote exemplifies Swiss media reporting about the new arrivals from Eritrea. They are generally portrayed as a group struggling with social and economic integration, being highly dependent on social welfare, and bringing tensions, disunity, and sometimes even violent conflicts to the Eritrean diaspora (Scheurer, 2015; Schoop and Baumgartner, 2013; Serafini, 2013).

The purpose of this paper is to show how the new generation of Eritrean refugees in Switzerland influences the identity formation of those born and/or raised in the diaspora. Certainly, the identity of second-generation Eritreans consists of a range of aspects and is influenced by a number of factors. Looking at different moments of encounter more closely, this paper aims to reveal how the presence of new Eritrean refugees in Switzerland influences second-generation Eritreans regarding their Eritrean identity, their affiliation towards Eritrea, and their positioning in a changing translocal social field. Thus, it discusses one particular aspect of the identity formation of second-generation Eritreans. We will argue that the newly arrived Eritreans have created a new context that entails new negotiations of identity and affiliation to both Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora for the second-generation Eritreans. We conclude that identity formation in a translocal context may involve various dynamic spaces of physical–personal and abstract encounters.

Thus, this paper contributes to the debate on the formation of identity in the second generation by focusing on socio-spatial interconnectedness and the experience of such through different encounters. With its focus on second-generation Eritreans, the paper addresses a subgroup of the Eritrean diaspora that has received relatively little attention and thus provides insights into the dynamics of and diversity among the Eritrean diaspora.

2 Methodology

We gathered our data for this case study using two main methods. First, the first author of the paper carried out semi-structured in-depth interviews with 19 second-generation Eritreans (10 women and 9 men) who were born and/or raised in the diaspora and are currently living in Switzerland. Interviews took place between October 2013 and July 2015 at different places in Switzerland, which we do not reveal to protect the privacy of participants. To select participants, we adopted a purposeful sampling strategy (Patton, 1990:169–186) and defined certain criteria that participants had to meet: they had to be children of the first/old generation of Eritrean refugees, those who left Eritrea before 2000 due to the war of independence or the subsequent border war. Further, they had to have grown up and gone through central stages of their personal development outside Eritrea. Thus, participants are not necessarily born and/or raised in Switzerland, and the term "second generation", strictly speaking, is incorrect. Besides the term "second generation", Rumbaut (2004) introduced the terms "1.75", "1.5", and "1.25" generation, which refer to children who arrived before the ages of 6, between 6 and 12, and after 12 (Andall, 2002:391). According to Aparicio, individuals up to the 1.5 generation "underwent most of their primary socialisation in their host country" (Aparicio, 2007:1170). Thus, as all of the participants of this study, except one, may be allocated to the 1.75 generation, it appears justified to count these as second-generation Eritreans. The last criterion is that participants have to be residents in Switzerland today. All but one of the interviews were conducted in German and have been translated into English. All names of interviewees have been replaced by pseudonyms.

Second, additional data was collected through an expert interview with the honorary consul of Eritrea in Switzerland (2014), who has a long-standing relationship with Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. The expert interview proved fruitful for collecting in-depth insights about the Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland. Further, integrating the expert methodologically as a private person provided subjective patterns of explanation of the object of research. This enabled to reconstruction of whether explanations were offered from a professional or a personal viewpoint (see Bogner and Menz, 2009:46–53).

3 Second generation, identity, and encounters in a translocal social field

> As much as translocality is seen as a phenomenon that can be described, it also refers to a particular condition, a particular way of being in the world, which is characterised by the tension and interplay of mobility and situatedness (Verne, 2012:19).

This paper brings together debates on translocality, second generation, identity formation, and encounters. Recent debates on translocality have examined the socio-spatial linkages and networks in the context of mobility and migration (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013:373). Translocality studies emphasise the relational character between people and places both to recognise actors' relational and dynamic interconnection with specific locations and "to understand the (re)construction of places through the movements of people, material objects and ideas through places" (Verne, 2012:18). Applying the translocal approach enables the constitution of identity to be examined in the context of migration and mobility (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013:378). Living in a translocal setting means that multi-local and/or mobile actors are connected to several different locations, with which they may identify and articulate their affiliation and "belongingness". Hence, places and localities play an important role in identity formation (see Oakes and Schein, 2006). In this context, the translocal perspective enables an examination of identity formation that transcends geographical boundaries by taking into account the complex nature of socio-spatial processes and interconnectedness. As the concept is concerned with "the local" it overcomes the so-called methodological nationalism dilemma (see Pries, 2005) by going beyond the spatial entity and primacy of the nation state and its national boundaries (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013:373–374; Oakes and Schein, 2006:xiii) and mapping out how other spaces and places can become significant during the process of international mobility (Brickell and Datta, 2011).

Members of a diaspora share a common origin. Whether really existing or imagined, this "home" is often equated with nation states (Hall, 1990:235). Nevertheless, the actual relationships transcend the connection to a nation state; they incorporate more complex interconnections to a range of places and therefore may be examined through the lens of translocality. In this light, a diaspora may be understood as a translocal community, a collective with a common origin situated and embedded in a translocal social field that spans a variety of multi-scaled spaces and locations (see Etzold, 2014:171–172). Such multi-local relations create shared interests and values amongst a group of people in the translocal social fields that manifest and maintain their common identity (Smith, 2001:184–185). The translocal community then presents the "result of a continuous process in the collective construction of identity, in which common origin functions as a medium" (Lohnert and Steinbrink, 2005:98). According to Bernal, Eritreans abroad, regardless their political affiliations to the Eritrean state, all refer to their common nation (Bernal, 2004:20). Thus, the Eritrean community can be considered a diaspora despite its internal tensions and divisions (Conrad, 2010:9–10).

Today, cross-border social fields and connections affect migrant communities more than ever, including their children, the second generation, in particular in "constructing, maintaining and negotiating collective identities" (Vertovec, 2001:575). Identities "are conceived as narratives, stories that people tell themselves and others about who they are,

and who they are not, as well as who and how they would like to/should be" (Yuval-Davis, 2010:266). This includes two dimensions: an inclusive dimension, which defines social membership within particular groups, based on similarities and shared features, and an excluding dimension that stresses distinctions from others (Howard, 2000:369). Thus, identity formation is a continuous relational process of both internal self-description and external ascription of and by others. In addition to narratives, images, memories, desires, and physical encounters influence the formation of one's identity (Conradson and Mckay, 2007:167).

The concept of encountering is often employed in urban studies to explore living with difference or strangers (Valentine, 2008:324). By linking geographies of encounter with studies in psychology on prejudice (see Valentine and Sadgrove, 2014; Valentine, 2008), Valentine illustrates how encounter and stereotyping are intertwined and finds that "contact with difference" may both reduce and also solidify and even harden prevailing prejudices (Valentine, 2008:325). However, this case study shows how encountering not only affects the perception of "the others" but may further entail negotiation about oneself. For immigrants, the formation of a personal and a group identity "depends on constant interaction with the state, and the various institutions and groups in the country of immigration, as well as with the society of the country of origin" (Castles and Miller, 2003:39). Hence, immigrants' negotiation of their identity involves both encounters with new geographical locations and societies and the experience of oneself within the new setting (Ryan, 2007:419). Identity in a translocal context is thus constituted through relationships with and perceptions of mutual localities, influenced by (1) encountering physical and social spaces and places, (2) physical or personal encounters with various actors, and (3) encounters with perceptions, images, and narratives. However, since both translocal communities and their translocal social fields are dynamic social constructions created and recreated by their actors, identities in a translocal context constantly produce and reproduce themselves anew, exactly as Hall outlines the formation of diaspora identities (Hall, 1990:235).

This paper focuses on the identity of the second generation in a translocal sphere. Children of immigrant parents "weave their collective identities out of multiple affiliations and positionings and link their cross-cutting belongingness with complex attachments and multiple allegiances to issues, peoples, places, and traditions beyond the boundaries of their resident nation-states" (Çaglar, 2001:610). Thus, they face specific questions of how to relate to different people and places and negotiate, either consciously or unconsciously, their relationships towards different localities and societies and so position themselves within a translocal social field. Jiménez illustrates that the influx of new immigrants from the ancestral home thereby presents an important aspect for the identity formation of post-immigrant generations, which, however, has been only marginally discussed in research (see Jiménez, 2008). The new Eritrean refugees thus may be understood as influential translocal actors regarding identity formation of second-generation Eritreans. In summary, this framework enables an examination of how encounters with a new translocal actor, the new generation of Eritrean refugees, influence the dynamic process of identity formation of second-generation Eritreans regarding their Eritrean identity and their stance towards Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora.

Various scholars have engaged with issues concerning the identity formation of second-generation Eritreans. The scholars focus on their relationship to the countries and societies of residence, discuss the formation and maintenance of Eritrean national identity amongst the second generation, and examine how members of the second generation relate to both the Eritrean state and Eritrean society (Arnone, 2010; Hepner, 2009b; von Nolting, 2002; Tecle, 2012; Zerat, 2009). Blood and kinship form the basis of their Eritrean identity, while knowledge of cultural aspects and features, most importantly language, are important means through which they perform it (Arnone, 2010:165). It is mainly parents and other community members who substantially influence the identity formation of second-generation Eritreans, since the second generation has only limited direct interactions with Eritrea (Zerat, 2009:67).

However, scholars have depicted that the Eritrean state may also play a vital role in this process. They refer to the Eritrean state as a "transnational state" (see Al-ali et al., 2001; Hepner, 2009a; Tecle and Goldring, 2013), because it actively targets its diaspora and promotes national identity. A prominent example of the state's translocal activities is the creation of the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YPFDJ). This is the exiled youth branch of the Eritrean ruling political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), and it promotes national identity and belonging specifically amongst those who were born and/or raised in the diaspora (Tecle, 2012:45). A second instance is the Know-Your-Country Tours (*Zura nHagerka*), visits organised by the state and offered to those born and/or raised abroad, with the objective of promoting national identity (see Conrad, 2006a, 2010).

This study investigates the effect of a recently emerged actor that may influence second-generation Eritreans' identity formation – the new generation of Eritrean refugees in Switzerland. This paper examines an additional and particular aspect of translocality: translocality that is brought in from outside by outsiders and takes place in the locality of people who are themselves more settled. New immigrants create "new frames of reference for identity" (Main and Sandoval, 2015:72) through interactions with the resident communities. Thus, the aim of this paper is to demonstrate how second-generation Eritreans encounter the new Eritrean refugees, and how experiences within this new translocal social field influence their affiliation to Eritrea and their translocal identities.

4 On encountering and grappling with the new generation of Eritrean refugees

Interviews, discussions, and observations reveal that the arrival of the new generation of Eritrean refugees has shaped the translocal field and created a new context for the resident second-generation Eritreans that entails both direct and indirect examinations of questions about their Eritrean identity and about Eritreans and Eritrea in the broad sense. We identified two major types of encounter between second-generation Eritreans and newcomers through which the second generation starts to reflect about their identity, their affiliation and relationship to Eritrea and the Eritrean diaspora, and their own position within the translocal social field: directly through actual encounters with people from the new generation of Eritrean refugees and by encountering them indirectly as a collective through perceptions, narratives, and a growing public discourse about Eritrea, Eritreans, and Eritrean refugees in Switzerland.

4.1 Encountering the new generation of Eritrean refugees

When asked about childhood memories, many of the second-generation Eritreans recalled feeling that they were amongst the first Eritreans, indeed even the first Africans, in their new places of residence. Selam mentioned that at that time Swiss people would often have failed to identify them as Eritreans.

> Today, Eritreans, I mean they are just... The train station is just full of them. But I have to admit, in the meantime their presence is so distinct and stark and there are so many Eritreans here by now, I feel neither startled nor enthusiastic or whatever. It's just like this. In the beginning, of course, it struck me as some kind of a joke. Because, you know, in former times, we [Eritreans] were all extremely exclusive. People did not know how Eritreans looked, and everybody just thought that we were Tamils. But now, they have grasped that the Horn of Africa exists, and people there look different from their picture of the "typical African" (Selam, interview 2014).

Most interviewees mentioned the absence of Eritreans in earlier times. Participants recounted that they had only little contact with other Eritreans, mostly limited to Eritrean families befriended by their parents. To meet each other, however, they sometimes had to undertake rather long journeys, sometimes even beyond the boundaries of their country of residence, attend community meetings, or go to cultural events and festivals. Similarly, Semhar pointed out how she looked out for Eritrean faces as a child and enjoyed going to a nearby asylum hostel to play with and meet other children from Eritrea. Thus, stories from their childhood showed that encounters were rather rare and mainly took place when people had deliberately decided to meet and were also willing to make a certain effort. However, second-generation Eritreans consciously discern that this has changed. In the same vein as Selam, interviews revealed that it seems to have become almost impossible to ignore the new arrivals in Switzerland. One interviewee commented that walking on the street today was like repeatedly seeing her mirror image or encountering herself. The physical appearance of the newly arrived Eritreans alone makes second-generation Eritreans realise that they look alike and evokes memories of their own or parental Eritrean origins and roots. Thus, the translocal social field has been changing, and the newly arrived Eritreans become new actors with which second-generation Eritreans' negotiate their Eritrean identity.

As a result of the rapidly growing numbers of Eritreans in Switzerland, encounters take place with increasing frequency throughout the public sphere, at bus and train stations, on public transport, or in shops. Further, more rarely they may encounter each other at Eritrean events, celebrations, and gatherings. However, such random encounters mostly do not involve greater personal interactions.

> So when [Eritreans who have lived here for a while] see you they automatically say... Either they say "Hi" or they say "Are you from..." and then you say "Hi". Sometimes they engage in a conversation, sometimes not. Just you have to acknowledge and say "Hi". That's it (Yohanna, interview 2014).

However, interviews revealed that it is commonly the new arrivals that initiate contact. Zerai, for instance, mentioned this:

> Once, I was going down the escalator at the train station and there was this Eritrean woman in front of me. She turned around and told me in Tigrinya [the most common of the Eritrean languages] that I should dress warmer as it could get cold in this country. You know, I was just wearing this light sweater. I answered her that I would be aware of that since I was born here. Immediately, she faced away and did not take any interest in me anymore (Zerai, interview 2013).

He then added another episode in which two newcomers were talking about him in Tigrinya without realising that he understood them. He was not sure if they did not recognise him as an Eritrean visually or just identified him as a second-generation Eritrean and therefore did not think that he would know Tigrinya well. However, many participants mentioned that the new Eritreans address them in Tigrinya when they greet them or ask for directions. Thus, the new arrivals from Eritrea normally recognise them as Eritreans on the basis of their looks, which again makes them aware of their physical similarities. Hence, a two-sided process occurs: the second-generation Eritreans recognise themselves as having or have ascribed to them by others certain "Eritrean attributes".

Besides visual aspects that make second-generation Eritreans aware of their Eritrean identity, they experience other, more discreet, characteristics through physical encounters with the new arrivals. Yohanna said that encountering Eritreans made her feel less Eritrean, because she realised that in some respects she is not typical of Eritreans, such as not speaking Tigrinya or being a rather individualistic person. In her case, the increasing presence of the new generation of Eritrean refugees thus entails an increasing awareness of the lack of such characteristics. Selam also stated that the presence of the new generation made her aware that she was different:

> What I realise is that there are not that many parallels between them and me, except that we look similar and have the same geographical origin. But that's it. But if you then look at, for example, formal and cultural education, mindset, interests or simply fashion and the way one dresses... I'm not saying one is right and the other one is wrong. But it's just completely different (Selam, interview 2014).

Meeting people with Eritrean characteristics may raise awareness not only of differences but also of similarities. Kisanet explained that encountering the new generation of Eritrean refugees called to mind her Eritrean identity, since she was familiar with the language and the culture. Thus, encountering Eritrean characteristics might involve both differentiation and connectedness, a rising awareness of one's origin, and so a sense of belonging. Like physical appearance, this seems to be a mutual process influenced by the newcomers' attitudes to the second-generation Eritreans too. For instance, Zerai interpreted the two encounters mentioned above as showing that the newcomers would normally identify him as Eritrean, but that he then, as a second-generation Eritrean, was not fully acknowledged as one of them. Further, he recounted that the surprised reaction of new Eritreans to his rather good Tigrinya again show that they do not expect him to speak Tigrinya and thereby indirectly deny him certain Eritrean characteristics. Thus, regardless of the effects, it becomes clear that encounters with Eritreans of the new refugee generation make second-generation Eritreans aware of Eritrean characteristics that they may share.

More personal encounters or intense contacts between second-generation Eritreans and the new generation of Eritrean refugees seem to be rather uncommon. Only a few interviewees mentioned personal contact with new arrivals. Zerai said that he has some contact with an Eritrean neighbour and has relatives or friends he knows from Eritrea amongst the newly arrived Eritreans. Still, several interviewees have jobs in which they are in regular personal contact with Eritreans of the new refugee generation. In this way, they get to know their personal stories, become involved in their asylum claims, and help them cope with their new surroundings. Ariam mentioned that she had learnt a lot about Eritrea from the new Eritrean refugees, and Helen explained that she only began thinking about her Eritrean heritage since she had interacted regularly with Eritreans. Personal contacts clearly entail a more intense involvement with Eritrea and Eritrean characteristics, but they also make second-generation Eritreans aware of their differences. However, we were unable to identify any clear influence of such encounter on our interviewees' position towards Eritrea.

Consequently, the influx of immigrants from the ancestral home country entails that characteristics such as language and the look become important aspects of the identity formation of post-immigration generations (see Jiménez, 2008). Facing people who look similar makes second-generation Eritreans aware of their common geographical origin and Eritrean roots. Encountering Eritrean characteristics evokes engagement with their own Eritrean characteristics and brings to light the complex and ambiguous negotiations of their Eritrean identity and position.

4.2 Encountering the new generation Eritrean refugees as a collective

The increasing presence of Eritrean newcomers constitutes an emerging collective of "others" within the translocal social field with whom the second-generation Eritreans renegotiate their relations. Besides facing individuals, second-generation Eritreans also encounter the new generation of Eritrean refugees as a group that is presented and perceived in a particular way, a group about which certain narratives and images exist. In general, interviewees perceive that the two generations of Eritrean refugees differ from each other and construct a rather stereotypical picture of the new arrivals.

> There are Eritreans who reject other Eritreans. This is mainly due to different political attitudes. You surely have seen the news... There were fights amongst Eritreans. We did not experience such things in the former times. We were always decent people, following faithfully our chosen path with patience. But today this is totally different. It's mainly due to the newcomers, I think (Interview with Dawit, interview 2014).

> The older generation has difficulties with the newcomers. Because the new arrivals just come and see what the old ones have achieved and therefore scorn them. (...) Like "look at them, they have a nice flat but did they ever do anything for the community...? They just sit here and support the government". And then, on the other side, you have the old generation that sees the newcomers as a young generation that just parties and gets drunk all the time. What's more, they get their residence permits, for which the old generation had to work 10 times harder, in just a few months and even get

> money from social welfare. And this then leads to these frictions (Amanuel, interview 2014).

Similarly, Luwam takes the view that the newly arrived Eritreans are not as she used to know Eritreans from previous times. Eritreans of the old generation, she said, used to have a distinct communal spirit and always helped and supported one another. Today, however, mistrust has evolved amongst Eritreans in Switzerland. Winta and Fenan observe that the new arrivals' scepticism is mainly directed towards unknown Eritreans and in particular towards the first generation of Eritrean refugees. This is mainly due to the political tensions within the Eritrean diaspora (see Glatthard, 2012), which have sometimes even erupted into violence for instance at an Eritrean independence day celebration or an Eritrean concert in Switzerland (see Schoop and Baumgartner, 2013; Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen, 2012). This atmosphere contributes to a breakup of the "remarkable sense of unity within the Eritrean diaspora" (Al-ali et al., 2001:594). However, Luwam does not blame the new arrivals for this suspicious atmosphere but the Eritrean regime. She takes the view that mistrust is already in the new generation of Eritreans' minds due to the climate of surveillance they would have experienced in Eritrea, an issue also taken up by other research (see Bozzini, 2011a, b). Nevertheless, the friction between the two generations is not only due to the political attitude that the others are assumed to have but also their lifestyle and behaviour in Switzerland. Like Amanuel, interviewees often characterised the newcomers in contrast to their parents' generation as a group that attracts negative attention, as they hang around in public places, are largely unemployed, mostly depend on social welfare, and barely make any effort to integrate into the resident society.

> My mom used to get about 500 Swiss francs from social welfare. This wasn't enough to live, that's why she simply had to find a job and therefore also had to learn the language. That is not to say that we should cut welfare payments, but... (Zerai, interview 2014)

> Welfare... Many of them do not want to be supported by the public purse. They want to work. But they often are forced to take welfare payments, as they don't find work. It is like a vicious circle. Even if going to language courses, without work they won't be able to learn German and integrate (Fenan, interview 2014).

The second-generation Eritreans indicate possible explanations for the newcomers' behaviour, such as personal life stories and experiences or changing conditions for migrants to stay in Switzerland and to integrate in the society. Winta mentioned that it is more difficult for Eritrean refugees to find a job than it was for the old generation of Eritrean refugees due to increasing competition and higher requirements for language skills and certificates, which prevent newcomers from finding work. Another participant added that the new Eritrean arrivals might not be acquainted with local application procedures. Further, Kisanet stressed that newcomers might suffer from the psychological consequences of their flight across the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean and that this might hinder their social and economic integration.

Such attempts to explain the newcomers' attitude show how second-generation Eritreans start to grapple with Eritrean characteristics and behaviour and Eritrean-ness in general. They rethink their relation to Eritrea and Eritreans. By encountering the new Eritreans as a group, they start to think about their own Eritrean identity and about their similarities with and differences from the new Eritreans. They negotiate their ambiguous identity and their connectedness with and their alienation from their Eritrean heritage.

> Of course it does not feel good when your colleagues at work [who have read about an affray between Eritreans in the news] ask you "Hey, tell us, were you there on Saturday when they [the Eritreans] beat each other up?" (...) They fight instead of holding together. This feels really strange to me. But these people do not just have an easy time here. They certainly didn't leave Eritrea and face all that risk just for fun. They did so because they did not see any other solution. And when I then see the tragedies in Lampedusa for instance... In such moments I feel Eritrean (Idris, interview 2014).

However, the interviews showed that second-generation Eritreans normally draw a clear line between the two generations of Eritrean refugees and distance themselves from the new arrivals by attaching certain attributes to each group. Alike Dawit or Idris, interviewees referred to topics in the news that tend to generalize, stereotype, and highlight issues like welfare dependency or the passivity of the newcomers. Thus, it appears that the second-generation Eritreans take up and repeat the rather prejudiced prevailing public discourse about Eritrean asylum seekers in Switzerland. Furthermore, shared experiences and stories about the two groups contribute to constructing an image of the distinctness of the "others" and lead second-generation Eritreans to dissociate themselves from the newcomers by stressing their difference. However, most interviewees added, as shown above, possible explanations for the newcomers' attitude. These reveal that second-generation Eritreans do not simply believe that the newcomers have new Eritrean characteristics but account for these differences by referring to concomitant circumstances. Thus, this distancing from the new arrivals seems to be a response of the contemporary negative image of Eritreans attached to the newcomers rather than a differentiation from them as Eritreans.

5 Conclusions

In this article, we have discussed the formation of second-generation Eritreans' identity and affiliation in a changing translocal context in Switzerland. The paper contributes to the debate on the identity formation of the second generation by adopting a translocal perspective and focussing on socio-spatial interconnectedness. The paper further provides insights into the diversity among the Eritrean diaspora and reveals that the relations between the second-generation Eritreans and the newly arrived generation Eritreans cannot be understood without the political context and the history of Eritrea's diaspora. We have shown that the contemporary arrival of a new generation of Eritrean refugees not only shapes the translocal sphere but also that they present an important new factor in the process of identity formation of those who were born and/or raised in the diaspora (see Jiménez, 2008). We have argued that encounters and interactions with the newly arrived Eritreans both personally and as a group in a discourse thereby represent crucial elements in this process. Focussing on encounters between the new immigrants and the post-migrant generation this study adds new insights to wider debates on the identity formation of the second generation by demonstrating how the changing translocal field may affect deliberations and negotiations of one's position within this field.

Like migrants, descendants of immigrant parents find themselves living in translocal contexts in which cross-border social fields and multi-scaled connections to different places play an important role in the formation of affiliations and identity. Thus, the concept of translocality enables the examination of the socio-spatial linkages and networks in the context of mobility and migration that construct and maintain collective identities (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013:373; Vertovec, 2001:575). Translocal actors continuously create and recreate their socio-spatial interconnectedness and thereby redefine their affiliation to localities and their identity.

The arrival of a new generation of Eritrean refugees and the growth of the diaspora in Switzerland has crucially shaped the predominant translocal social field. For the second-generation Eritreans, the newcomers present a new translocal actor or collective that influences deliberations about Eritrea and Eritreans and thus about their identity. In this, the encounter with the Eritrean newcomer is one central aspect. This research reveals that the second-generation Eritreans mainly encounter the newcomers in two ways: first as individuals and second as a group in a discourse. Interpersonal encounters cause the second-generation Eritreans to become aware of their Eritrean identity and at the same time visualises differentness from the new Eritrean arrivals that may result in an ambiguous negotiation of their relation to Eritrea and Eritreans. Further, encountering the new generation of Eritreans in a discourse entails that second-generation Eritreans tend to distance themselves from the new generation of Eritrean refugees. However, this distancing is more from the generally negative image of Eritreans found in public discourse than from them as Eritreans.

Identity formation in general is a relational process influenced by narratives, images, memories, desires, and physical encounters (Conradson and Mckay, 2007:167). This case study shows that translocal identity formation may be understood as an ongoing relational process in which both physical and more abstract encounters present central factors that influence translocal actors in their engagement with their felt connectedness and identity. Hence, identity formation in a translocal context may involve various dynamic spaces of encounters that influence the relation to various locations and the renegotiation of identities. Although new immigrants thereby play an important role, their influence on the identity formation process of post-immigrant generations from the same origin has received only little attention and thus needs to be taken into account in research on identity formation of people with immigrant background (Jiménez, 2008:1562). The Eritrean diaspora in Switzerland is special due to the two distinct generations of immigration, their tense relationship, and different perception of Eritrean politics that exists among Eritreans. Further, witnessing an influx of a large amount of new immigrants, as presented in this paper, may affect the encounters and their effects on identity formation of the post-immigrant generation in a particular way. On a more general level, the case study shows the central importance of a detailed understanding of the manner of encounters with new immigrants, since they are a crucial aspect of the identity formation process of post-immigrant communities influencing the (re)construction of self and others. Further, it indicates that the perception of marked differences between the two groups may entail a more intense and challenging negotiation of identity that, however, needs to be investigated through further research.

6 Data availability

Data are not publicly accessible.

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Paper III:
Generational transmission of the decisive Eritrean past

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Politics of belonging and the Eritrean diaspora youth: Generational transmission of the decisive past[17]

Abstract: This article addresses the generational transmission of the decisive Eritrean past and illustrates its influence on the reinforcement and maintenance of Eritrean identity and sense of belonging to Eritrea on young Eritreans grown up in the diaspora. It argues that the transmission and preservation of narratives and knowledge about the decisive Eritrean past makes the Eritrean history a "chosen trauma", which constitutes an important aspect of the formation of a collective identity. Thereby, the article focuses on two particular modes of transmissions: first, within families from parents to children and second, by the international conferences of the YPFDJ, the exile youth branch of the country's ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice PFDJ. The generational transmission of a decisive past helps to understand the formation of identity and belonging of second-generation Eritreans and further contributes to the broader debate on post-migrant generations constituting belonging in a transnational field.

Keywords: Belonging; diaspora; Eritrea; second generation; identity, chosen trauma

1 Introduction

In the last years, a vast amount of studies has emerged that describe how individuals living in transnational contexts establish and maintain relations across national boundaries. A majority of these studies has been addressing the transnational lives of actual migrants, while research on transnationalism in terms of their children, the so-called second generation, has been widely neglected (King and Christou 2011, 452). Furthermore, scholars then are rather divided when it comes to the debate about transnationalism of the second generation (see Levitt and Waters 2002). Irrespective of the actual transnational engagement of the second generation, children of migrants are often raised and socialized in transnational settings involving various cross-border networks and thus relate to more than one country (Levitt 2009, 1231). As a result, descendants of immigrants find themselves faced by questions of who they are and where they belong. Besides, the ambiguous term 'second generation' itself already indicates that growing up to immigrant parents may affect the constitution of belonging. It involves the implicit assumption of being native to another place of origin and thus ascribes a certain belonging to the individuals (Toivanen 2014, 23). Then, the process of developing their sense of self is influenced by their manifold personal, organisational, institutional or economical connections as well as by political projects relating to race, ethnicity, and nation (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002, 171/194).

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In the context of Eritrea, several studies on identity formation of young diaspora Eritreans reveal how second-generation Eritreans constitute and maintain their Eritrean national identity in the transnational field (Arnone 2010; Conrad 2010; Nolting von 2002; Tecle 2012; Zerat 2009). Thereby, scholars point to the crucial role of parents in shaping their children's identity by teaching them Eritrean values and Eritrean culture and socializing them accordingly (Conrad 2006, 7; Zerat 2009, 67). Although mentioned, the Eritrean history as well as its effects on the second-generation Eritreans' identity and their sense of belonging, however is hardly referred to. The aim of this paper is to draw specific attention on the cross-generational transmission of the Eritrean decisive past and to reveal its influence on the promotion and preservation of national consciousness, identity and belonging within the diaspora youth. It points out two specific ways, through which this may take place: First, the role of parents and second, the annual international conferences of the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice YPFDJ, which is the exile youth branch of the Eritrean People's Front for Democracy and Justice PFDJ. Applying the concept of chosen trauma enables the consideration of the decisive Eritrean past and its influence on second-generation Eritreans' negotiation of identity and belonging. This has received only little attention in recent studies despite it appears to be particularly crucial in the Eritrean case. The paper thus focuses on the process of the transmission of the decisive Eritrean past as a means of maintaining Eritrean identity rather than its actual outcome since the effects vary individually. By shedding light on the transmission of the decisive Eritrean past onto the second-generation Eritreans, this paper reveals the importance of decisive pasts of ancestral home countries to post-migrant generations regarding their negotiation of identity and belonging towards their origins. Thereby, the article contributes to the broader debate on second generation individuals constituting belonging in a transnational field.

With the focus on generational transmission, this paper conveys an image of sense of belonging of the second generation as being some kind of top-down process. However, second-generation Eritreans are not just passive individuals lacking the capacity to negotiate belonging by themselves. They also actively engage in constructing and shaping their identity and their sense of belonging (see Conrad 2010; Tecle 2012). Furthermore, the formation of identity and belonging involves a vast range of influencing factors. The article thus addresses just one particular aspect that, however, plays an important part in contributing to understand the formation of identity and belonging of second-generation Eritreans.

2 Methodology

I gathered the empirical material by using different methods. From end of 2013 to mid-2015 I conducted semi-structured interviews with ten female and six male Eritreans, born and/or grown up and undergone the major part of their socialization in the diaspora. Due to the overall focus of this research project, all of the interviewed second-

generation Eritreans[18] currently are living in Switzerland. In order to select 'information-rich' interview participants, I adopted a purposeful sampling strategy (Patton 1990, 169–186). In terms of the YPFDJ respectively its conferences, interviewees consist of both individuals with personal experiences as well as of individuals, to whom the YPFDJ does not mean anything. In addition to interviews, I accompanied a group of second-generation Eritreans travelling to Eritrea in 2014. Thereby, I was able to experience conversations and discussions amongst second-generation Eritreans. These provided further insights about both the overall research topic and the question concerned in this paper. Additionally, an expert interview (Bogner and Menz 2009, 46–53) with the honorary consul of Eritrea in Switzerland in 2014, who has in-depth knowledge about Eritrea and its diaspora due to his long-standing relationship with the country, served as a further source of information. Finally, another data source constitute documents of the 10th annual Euro YPFDJ conference hold in Switzerland in 2014. Besides a document that reads as a kind of conference program, I was able to see different documents of presentation or seminaries of the conference.

However, in the course of my data collection I realized that many second-generation Eritreans did not want to participate in the study. An Eritrean man, whom I approached with the request for helping me to find eligible study participants, replied:

> I am still trying to find people who consent to be interviewed. But to tell you the truth, it proves very difficult. Because people are sceptical and reluctant. (Statement of an Eritrean parent, 2014)

In the event of real or perceived contradictions or inconsistencies between individuals or groups, people are rather suspicious of outsiders and thus may not be willing to talk to them (Cohen and Arieli 2011, 424–425). In terms of the Eritrean diaspora, the fragmentation based on divergent political opinions creates such a climate of mutual distrust and mistrust of unknown outsiders (Glatthard 2012, 21; Conrad 2010, 14). In the present case, those who describe themselves as apolitical as well as individuals participating in the YPFDJ and therefore are understood to have a government-friendly attitude seemed to be especially restrained and were difficult to access. It proved often impossible to even take up contact. Therefore, I can only speculate about their reasons for not participating. On the basis of my field experiences, however, possible motives might be the perceived omnipresence of politics in discussions about Eritrea or the individuals' perception that international reports and studies portray only critical, negative or undifferentiated pictures of Eritrea. As a result of this limitation, online platforms constitute a further important data source. Besides the homepages

[18] The term second generation labels children of immigrants, who are born in the diaspora, while other categories were introduced for those who are born in their parents' home country but raised abroad (Andall 2002, 391). Several interviewees have left the country only during their early childhood. Nevertheless, since all but one migrated before the age of 12 and therefore underwent their primary socialization in the diaspora (Aparicio 2007, 1170), I will refer to them as second-generation Eritrean.

'dehay.com', 'shaebia.org' and 'meadna.com', from which I will cite below, webpages such as 'tesfanews.net', 'awate.com' or also YouTube clips have provided insights about the YPFDJ conferences and revealed personal experiences of conference participants. YPFDJ websites were not available to access, and the YPFDJ currently seems to be chiefly active via social media platforms. These, however, revealed rather irrelevant content in terms of this article's topic and thus were of less relevance to this study. The combination of these different data sources and methods ensured to gain a broader picture of the research topic.

All interviews except one were conducted in German and have been translated to English as accurately as possible by myself. In order to protect the privacy of study participants, I replaced the participants' names with pseudonyms. To ensure their anonymity, I further do not provide more details, as this could make participants easier to identify.

3 Analytical Frame: Politics of belonging and the chosen trauma

Questions about identity and belonging present central issues for people with migration background and much research in the field of migration, diaspora, transnationalism and youth addresses this topic (see Anthias 2009; Fouron and Glick Schiller 2002). Nevertheless, the two concepts are both overused and under-theorized. Belonging and (collective) identities are often used, confusingly, interchangeably (as was just done above) and thereby seem to be put often on a same level. Further, they are not mutually exclusive but rather interrelated and overlap (Anthias 2006, 19–22 ; Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011, xv–xviii). In simplified terms, both concepts deal with questions about the self and who we are as a person, about inclusion and exclusion and about processes of contructing boundaries and hierarchies. Nonetheless, the two concepts certainly cannot be completely equated:

> Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not). Not all of these stories are about belonging to particular groupings and collectivities; they can be, for instance, about individual attributes, body images, vocational aspirations or sexual prowess. (Yuval-Davis 2006, 202)

Further, one may belong to a collective without fully identify with it or one may identify with a group without fully belong to it (Anthias 2009, 9–10). Pfaff-Czarnecka & Toffin then argue that belonging includes more aspects than collective identity that rather narrows down the complex process of constructing shared characteristics (Pfaff-Czarnecka & Toffin 2011, xvi). Drawing upon this, I understand belonging as encompassing identity and treat identity and collective identity – collective here mainly refers to nationality and/or culture – as an integral part of belonging. In order to study the mechanisms of promoting and maintaining a sense of national identity and belonging to Eritrea amongst the diaspora Eritrean youths, I adopt an analytical frame linking debates on belonging and the politics of belonging with the nation respectively

nationalism and the concept of chosen trauma. But what exactly is belonging and how does it come into being?

Belonging is a dynamic process, in which people negotiate their relationships to a range of different subjects and objects. It comprises the connection and ties to 'other people, places or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by learning rather than the position of identity as a stable state' (Probyn 1996, 19). This process can be both an act of self-attribution or identification and an act of ascription being assigned by others. Yuval-Davis then identifies three analytical levels: First, the *social location* of individuals that constitutes the set of characteristics involving a range categories such as gender, class or age group determining one's place within the society. Second, the *individual's identifications and emotional attachments* to various collectives established through the reproduction of narratives and stories about one's identity. Such narrations may relate to the past, the present or the future and are forwarded and reproduced from one generation to the other. And third, the *ethical and political value system* that is about the judgement of own and other's attachments and belongings (Yuval-Davis 2006, 199–204; Yuval-Davis 2011, 89–94). Thus, belonging 'involves affectual or emotional aspects; feeling "at home", memories, ties and so on. It also involves sharing core moral values, which are not necessarily culturally specific ones; not all moral values signal belonging in a cultural community' (Anthias 2009, 10). One particular frame of reference is the nation, even if it presents 'an imagined political community (…) because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members' (Anderson 2006[1983], 6). In regards of national identity and belonging to a nation, a belief in commonality arises out of a shared culture and traditions and basic common ideologies, understandings, opinions and ideas linking people to a certain homeland (Smith 1991, 10–11). Further, Volkan depicts that for nations, as for practically every large group, a "chosen trauma" is another important aspect that form people's collective identity.

> The "chosen trauma" is one component of this [large-group] identity. The term "chosen trauma" refers to the shared mental representation of a massive trauma that the group's ancestors suffered at the hand of an enemy. (Volkan 2001, 79)

A chosen trauma originates from a decisive past event or moment linked to a conflict with another large group. Through the mental representation of the actual event and the 'transgenerational transmissions' from those who experienced it first-hand to subsequent generations, the event then becomes a chosen trauma. These representations are characterized and influenced by narratives of victimhood, heroism, or both together. As the decisive event passes on to future generations, historical reality or truth becomes less important and it becomes a mythologized narrative (see Volkan 2001; 2004). In terms of belonging to a nation, the chosen trauma respectively a decisive past event influences individuals' identifications and emotional attachments to the collective,

links them together and thus presents an important aspect of their sense of belonging to the nation.

The process of maintaining boundaries of belonging and differentiating between *we* and *the others* is referred to as the politics of belonging. It 'comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectives that are, at the same time, themselves being constructed by these projects in very particular ways' (Yuval-Davis 2006, 197). These political projects focus on the discursive construction and reproduction of boundaries of belonging, which determine, maintain and justify inclusion and exclusion (Anthias 2013, 6–7; Yuval-Davis 2011, 18–21). This includes a formal aspect such as legal membership defined by rules, rights and duties as well as a more informal aspect relating to everyday experiences of membership and 'the emotions such memberships evoke' (Yuval-Davis et al. 2005, 526).

Politics of belonging and the political projects are of considerable relevance to migrants and their descendant. On the one hand, they have to negotiate their relation and their belonging to the resident society, the nation and the country in which they are living. On the other hand, they simultaneously are claiming and defining their affiliations and belonging to the nation and the nation-state from which they or their ancestors originate (Brubaker 2010, 66; Yuval-Davis 2011, 81–112). Concerning politics of belonging of diaspora individuals and their homeland relation, 'long-distant nationalism' (Anderson 1992) is an important aspect, or indeed a political project, which strengthens the feeling of belonging to the distant home. I argue that the transmission of a decisive past event may constitute an important element of (long-distance) nationalist political project of belonging. A nationalist political project may reflect specifically upon such events and use them as a base for nationalist tendencies. Although the generational transmission of a decisive past event is a rather unconscious process (Volkan 2004, 48), it also may be actively promoted. Particularly leaders seem 'to know how to reactivate a chosen trauma, especially when their large group is in conflict or has gone through a drastic change and needs to reconfirm or enhance its identity' (Volkan 2001, 88). Thus, calling to mind a decisive past event presents a powerful tool of politics of belonging since it serves as a strategy to sustain and reinforce boundaries of belonging separating *us* from *them* and thereby promotes sense of belonging to a collective.

4 Eritrea and its decisive past

The creation of modern nation-states often has involved violent confrontations. Thus, the struggle for nationhood and the creation of a nation-state may present a "chosen trauma" that constitutes, alongside with other aspects, a crucial feature of national identity (Volkan 2004, 27). It is not the objective of this paper to provide a detailed overview on the Eritrean struggle for nationhood by repeating the exiting literature (see Connell 1997; Hepner 2009; Iyob 1995), but to illustrate how the Eritrean history consists of decisive past events that are important for the Eritrean national identity.

Eritrea has witnessed a 'history of pain' (Arnone 2010, 86) that makes it difficult to refer to one specific decisive moment. In fact, there are multiple decisive past events with regards to Eritrea's nation-building process (see Dorman 2005; Reid 2005) that constitute, in their entirety, a "chosen trauma". As Reid's field note illustrates, these span the time from the colonial era, the Ethiopian federation and annexation, the struggle for independence, to more recent political developments such as the UN sanctions:

> The rubber dragons [at the Independence day celebrations] are particularly important, as they represent all of Eritrea's bogeymen, its enemies real and imagined, historic and current, from evil colonialism, to the faceless uncaring "international community", to treacherous internal opponents. (Reid 2005, 479)

Following the end of the colonial area, the international community has federated Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1952 and also did not intervene against the illegal Ethiopian annexation ten years later. From the perspective of Eritrea, the great powers not only have ignored its desire for independence. Furthermore, they have done nothing to prevent the unlawful annexation. Rather they pursued their own interests, most notably the United States that maintained good relations with Ethiopia (Connell 1997, 19–26; Conrad 2010, 28–35; Iyob 1995, 61–97; Sorenson 1991, 303–307). This also applies to the 30-year struggle for independence between 1961 and 1991.

> During the struggle, the EPLF [Eritrean People's Liberation Front] did not receive support from the Eastern Bloc, which sided with the Marxist Ethiopian Dergue regime, or from Western governments due to its ideological orientation. This led to the emergence of two structural characteristics of the Eritrean regime: the insistence of self-reliance coupled with a deep mistrust towards the international community (including foreign donors) and the instrumentalization of the diaspora as a funding resource' (Hirt 2013, 6)

For Eritreans who lived through this time whether in Eritrea or in exile, the Eritrean independence struggle and the experienced violence constitutes a 'national trauma' (Bernal 2017, 6). A further decisive past event is linked to emerging territorial conflicts around the village of Badme entailing the violent 1998–2000 Ethiopian-Eritrean boarder war. Although major Western governments were guarantors of the peace agreement involving the demarcation of the boundary, they failed to push the implementation through as Ethiopia refused to adhere to the demarcation decision. From an Eritrean perspective, the monitoring governments, above all the United States, omitted to exercise pressure on Ethiopia because they did not want to risk the good relations with their chosen regional ally Ethiopia (Hirt 2013, 7; Gray 2006). A more recent decisive event is the imposition of sanctions by the UN in 2009. The Eritrean

government, which 'called the sanctions "illegal and unjust" (…) claimed that the United States was the mastermind behind the resolution' (Hirt 2013, 18–19).

Hence, Eritrea's history is characterized by multiple challenges and a continuous struggle for self-determination against external powers and the international community interfering in the country's political destiny, which presents an important element of today's Eritrean national identity (Arnone 2010, 85; Dorman 2005, 207–209; Sorenson 1991, 308–309). Thereby, heroic stories of the small Eritrean rebel movement defeating the oversized Ethiopian ruler 'against all odds' (Connell, 1997) as well as narratives of being neglected, overlooked or victimized are central.

> The government has been successful in developing a narrative in which Eritrea is portrayed as a heroic nation struggling against the rest of the world in order to achieve independence and self-reliance, a fact which, according to the government's narrative, has triggered an international conspiracy in order to weaken the young nation. (Hirt 2015a: 25)

Thus, both narratives of heroism and victimhood of decisive past events are important elements. These narratives and myths as well as their reinterpretation were strongly linked to Eritrea's nation-building process (Nolting von 2002, 76–77), and so contribute to construct and maintain boundaries of belonging. In the past century, the power of interpretation of the meaning of these events for Eritrean national identity mainly has been with the Eritrean leadership (Conrad 2010, 215). Since 2001, however, alternative notions of Eritrean nationalism and the national narratives have emerged and debated amongst the Eritrean community (Bernal 2014, 3; Dorman 2005, 218). Yet, the Eritrean decisive past, as pictured here, still presents a conventional and widespread narrative of Eritrean nationalism advanced by the contemporary leadership.

Today's Eritrean youth, however, lacks of concrete experiences of these decisive past events. Hence, the chronicle of the Eritrean struggle for self-determination, on which Eritrean nation-state and Eritrean nationalism bases, seems to be threatened to fall into oblivion (Müller 2012, 796). Thus, tales about Eritrea's past constitute an important means, through which the national narrative may be passed on to the next generation. Conrad reveals that such 'stories about Eritrean heroism as well as the wrongdoings the Eritrean has suffered yet not succumbed to' (Conrad 2006, 6) are particularly important to those born and/or raised in the diaspora in order to form their relationship to the ancestral origin. In the following, I will reveal two specific ways through which the Eritrean decisive past transmits to the diaspora youth.

4.1 Transmission of the decisive past and the role of parents

> People in my age [second-generation Eritreans] often are conditioned by their parents to develop a national pride as if they used to live there. As if they had witnessed it all by themselves. As if they have been to war and so on. But, we simply were not. We have been growing up *here*. And all we

> know, we know just from stories. (…). There is indeed this strong, eager Eritrean national pride that many feel. I don't know where this might originate from except from their parents. What I do not understand, though, is how this is nourished and maintained. (Selam, interview 2014)

Parents, friends and community members are important for second-generation Eritreans as regards of what it means to be Eritrean and thus the formation of Eritrean identity (Zerat 2009, 67). Alike, interviews revealed that the earliest and probably most prominent transmission of Eritrean identity shaping the second-generation Eritreans' sense of belonging to Eritrea took place within the family circles. Most participants mentioned that it was their parents, through whom they learned about Eritrea and who educated them as Eritreans.

> I was raised Eritrean. My parents are from Eritrea and not from Europe. So, they could not help but raising me as an Eritrean. (Kisanet, interview 2014)

Conrad points out that Eritrean parents even try to teach and impart their children Eritrean values and the Eritrean genealogy (Conrad 2006, 7). Almost all participants agreed that it was a particular concern of their parents that they picked up an Eritrean language, mostly Tigrinya. Further, the parents often maintained contacts to other diaspora members. Through such interactions or participating in Eritrean national or religious celebrations in the community, the second-generation Eritreans experienced Eritrean traditions or habits and thus learned about Eritrean identity. Despite Yohanna described that she did not conceive it as a deliberate act of passing on the Eritrean identity and nationalism by her parents, she stressed that this may be true for many others:

> It was more a celebration thing and less identity and nationalism and things like that. Maybe my parents wanted it that way as well. I never actually asked them. But it's true that it was very rare to have children that didn't go to classes, to Eritrean classes. Because usually they [parents] subscribed them to some school where you could learn [an Eritrean] language, where you could write and read. (Yohanna, interview 2014)

Alike, Idris mentioned that the actual engagement of parents in transmitting Eritrean identity to their children turns out very differently (Idris, interview 2014). Few participants even mentioned that their parents did not put effort in the perpetuation of the Eritrea identity. One interviewee stressed that her parents rather place emphasis on her integration in the host society than educate her Eritrean, while Semhar stated that her father even tried to prevent her from having contact with other Eritreans and also refused to talk in Tigrinya to her (Semhar, interview 2014). However, in general, participants stressed that it seemed to be important to their parents that they would adopt some basic Eritrean characteristics and knowledge about Eritrea and its culture and at least know where they originally come from.

Besides learning about culture and traditions, interviews revealed that knowing about the country's history presents an important aspect of the transmission of the Eritrean identity and a sense of belonging.

> To people who have asked [Tarik] about his origin, he always would have replied 'Eritrea' and then explained, full of pride, that this is a small country in East Africa. He would have a special connection to Eritrea, he stated, due to all the stories his parents have told him. And they further have promoted this by enrolling him to the Tigrinya school. As long as he was a youngster, his parents would have been doing their utmost that he did not lose his Eritrean culture. (Tarik, interview notes 2014)

Narrations about Eritrea and personal family histories told by parents serve as an important means to convey a certain image of Eritrea and help shape the second-generation Eritreans' formation of an Eritrean identity. As Conrad highlights, these may be 'influenced by the political indoctrination of the EPLF mass organisation' (Conrad 2006, 7). Shaped by the EPLF's ideology or not, interviews showed that these narrations and the experiences or memories of the study participants often involve stories about the Eritrean struggle.

> My father was very active within the diaspora and I have learned much about Eritrea from him. At the weekends, he was at sessions and meetings. He also has organized community events here in Switzerland. And he always told me about Bologna [the annually Eritrean Festival in Bologna before Eritrea's independence] and how they have also been collaborating with the Italian government. And they also used to have movies.
>
> Sunday was always the family day. You normally invite other people over and celebrate the traditional coffee ceremony. You just sit together and talk while the TV is on and you watch Eritrean broadcast. Well, by then, there was no EriTV so you had to watch videos. About the protests and so. And like that we [the children] have also learned about it. Then, when the war broke out and my uncles went to war, my parents consistently called home and always watched TV. And when the border agreement has been made, my father got up at 2 o'clock at night to watch the decision. I remember having told him to wake me up, too.
>
> I also went to demonstrations with him. Yes, he surely has influenced me regarding politics. My parents also included us children in discussions. In this way, I started to gain interest. Of course, I still was young, about nine years old. But now I am active myself and became a member of the YPFDJ. I guess without my parents' support and engagement things never would have turned out this way. (Amanuel, interview 2014)

This quote illustrates that childhood experiences and memories constitute an important element, through which the decisive past transmits to the next generation and the

"chosen trauma" may materialize. Alike Amanuel, different interviewees remembered how their parents regularly have informed themselves about the situation in Eritrea and were engaging with homeland politics. In order to receive some news, they used to listen to the radio or watched war reporting and documentations about the Eritrean struggle for independence. Even Semhar, whose father tried to keep her away from anything related to Eritrea, remembered these war broadcasts, which were absolutely not suitable for children (Semhar, interview 2014). Thus, the mentioned videos and broadcast appear as an important means, though which the second-generation Eritreans learned about the decisive past of their ancestral origin. In addition, personal stories about the struggle for independence and narration about war experiences learn have similar effects.

> Talking of myself, it is true that I somehow forgot about it [Eritrea's history and the struggle for independence]. When I was a young boy… From parents, you often heard things such as "those people are such-and-such people" or "well, the Ethiopians, we're at war with them, they are bad". And like that they produced a bad image about others, you know. (…) Earlier I then believed that these people were bad only because they told me so. (Dawit, interview 2014)

Various interviewees mentioned that their parents told them about the struggle for independence, about how their relatives went to war and how they have witnessed traumatic war experiences. Despite it seem to be less common to talk about personal losses (see Bernal 2017), several interviewees also told stories involving the loss of family members. Besides imparting knowledge about the decisive Eritrean past, such personal tales further may create empathy and understanding for the Eritrean struggle among second-generation Eritreans.

In the opening quote, Selam wondered about the mechanism of the perpetuation of the national pride amongst the second generation. Interviews revealed that narrations about the Eritrean history but also the parent's engagement with Eritrea, which second-generation Eritreans have been witnessing during their childhood, play a crucial role. Thus, parents transmit narratives of the decisive Eritrean past both deliberately and unconsciously to the succeeding generation. As the examples of Amanuel or Dawit showed they thereby directly influence their children's minds. Furthermore, the manner in which some interviewees recalled stories about the struggle for independence revealed that some interviewees seem to embrace the decisive past to a certain extent as a part of their own history and identity. Thereby, the personal war experiences of ancestors or parents tend to be adopted and thus affect the second-generation Eritreans identity. Yet, Dawit's statement indicates that second-generation Eritreans do not generally internalize the decisive past, as he does not unconditionally adopt these narratives anymore. However, irrespectively whether or not second-generation Eritreans endorse such stories as part of their own, interviews revealed that the decisive past constitutes a crucial element in relation to the negotiation of second-generation

Eritreans' identity, as they are generally aware of it. The generational transmission makes it a "chosen trauma" and so becomes important also for the next generation.

4.2 Transmission of the decisive past and the YPFDJ conferences

As a part of its nation-building strategy, the Eritrean leadership has introduced programs to include today's Eritrean youth in the development of the nation and the nation-state (Dorman 2005, 210; Müller 2012, 796; Riggan 2016, 22). One such strategy specifically targeting on the diaspora youth presents the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice YPFDJ. In 2004, the PFDJ created the YPFDJ at a time 'when the first group of Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora were entering adulthood and thus arguably becoming independent from the direct influence of their parents' (Tecle 2012, 67). Hence, Tecle argues that it may be understood as a project of the Eritrean 'transnational state' (see Tecle and Goldring 2013) aiming to institutionalize belonging and reinforce and maintain Eritrean identity amongst the diaspora youth (Tecle 2012, 66). However, before going into greater detail about the its annual international conferences, what exactly is the YPFDJ and what are its objectives?

As mentioned earlier, the YPFDJ is the exile youth branch of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice PFDJ that leads Eritrea since independence. Despite the PFDJ defines itself explicitly as a front and not a party (Bernal 2001, 153; EPLF/PFDJ 1994), it often is referred to as Eritrea's only political party that currently governs Eritrea as a one-party state (see Hepner and Tecle 2013; Müller 2012; Schmitz-Pranghe 2010). Alike, there is no uniform understanding of the very nature of the YPFDJ as interviews revealed. Many study participants referred to specific development projects of the YPFDJ and thereby conveyed an image of some kind of (development) aid organisation. Others labelled it specifically as a youth party, while the YPFDJ describes it as a diaspora movement (YPFDJ 2014, 6). Perhaps, Amanuel's description best illustrates the general understanding of nature of the YPFDJ:

> When you take a closer look, it is not an aid organisation but a political organisation, which then also participates in the development of the country. Be it through projects in Eritrea or also in Switzerland. (Amanuel, interview 2014)

The YPFDJ's purpose is to create 'and continue to create a generation of conscious, strong and capable youth who recognize their important role in promoting the proud Eritrean history, identity and culture while working together and serving their community' (YPFDJ 2014, 1). It aims to promote and preserve national identity by instilling the values, principles, visions and experiences of the past generation and the liberation movement amongst the diaspora youth and to include it in the political and economic development of Eritrea (Tecle 2012, 68–69; Weldehaimanot 2006, 12; YPFDJ 2014, 8). Thus, the YPFDJ aims to impart the PFDJ ideologies and the legacy of the struggle for independence to the diaspora youth and to integrate them into the

nation-building process. Hence, it presents a political project of the PFDJ leadership that constitutes 'a hub for the reproduction of [Eritrean] nationalism' (Hirt 2015b, 12–13).

Alongside a variety of activities, the YPFDJ annual international conferences seem to be an important item on the YPFDJ's agenda. These worldwide gatherings both enable and promote the transnational networking and consolidation of young diaspora Eritreans. The conferences normally attract several hundred Eritrean attendees ranging from diaspora youth to community leaders, diplomats, embassy officials and PFDJ representatives to invited guests (Eritrean Ministry of Information, 2013). Study participants who have attended YPFDJ conferences described that the conference proceeding typically includes plenary sessions, presentations, seminaries and workshops accompanied with discussion forums and the possibility to ask questions. Further, it comprises entertaining program items such as theatrical or dance performances. Each conference then has its specific main topic. The 10th Euro YPFDJ conference hold in Switzerland in 2014, of which I was able to view some conference documents, put special emphasis on Eritrean national identity and culture. The conference documentations indicate that the Eritrean decisive past thereby plays a vital role:

> Although the roots of the Eritrean identity dates [sic] back to ancient times, it is our common experience of fighting colonial powers that consolidated our national identity and the nation building process has further developed it and transferred it to a new generation of Eritreans. (YPFDJ 2014, 17)

> The fact that we have maintained our unity within our diversity is not an accident but an outcome of a long struggle for a common cause. It must be stressed here that the inclusive and participatory nature of the liberation struggle transcending ethnic and religious differences has played a pivotal role in unifying various ethnic groups within differing religious affiliations for a common goal and shared values. This process has emboldened the strong sense of collective Eritrean identity culture, which we all now relate to. (YPFDJ 2014, 15)

The referred document points out that the decisive past crucially has determined the Eritrean identity. It emphasizes that Eritrean culture and national identity are outcomes of the struggle for independence basing on the ideologies inherited from the liberation fighters. Values such as self-reliance, political independence, unity and harmony despite ethnic and religious diversity but also camaraderie or the dedication for the national cause and Eritrea's development thereby are listed as some core attributes. Further, the document reveals that the cross-generational reinforcement and preservation of the Eritrean identity according to the PFDJ national charter presents an important aim for the YPFDJ and its conference (YPFDJ 2014, 15–16). Various program items such as sessions, presentations or aspects of the broader conference

framework program then seem to serve to transmit the Eritrean identity accordingly. Interview statements about personal conference experiences as well as conference impressions found online indicate that the Eritrean history thereby seems to be ever-present all topic.

> The theater play organized by YPFDJ Oslo was touching; vivid and brought up many memories from the last stages of the liberation struggle.
>
> Semhar Hailu played the role of a young Eritrean girl that was raised in the Diaspora and was trying to understand how it was possible for her father and his generation to be 'tegadelties' in 'meda' [Eritrean liberation fighters in the field or in areas of operation] with no communication with family and friends, knowing that each and everyday [sic] could be their last, having nothing but the clothes they were wearing and their Kalashnikov while fighting the world superpowers from the mountains of Sahel. She did not only want to understand it, but she wanted to know everything right away. (…). The play confirmed to me that our generation was able to pass on our history of struggle in an understandable way to the new generation. (Participant's impressions of the 7th YPFDJ conference, Dehai 2011)

Study participants explained that entertaining actives involving various performances by conference participants such as theatre plays, reciting ancient songs or poems as well as items of the conference's framework program such as exhibitions or concerts of famous Eritrean musicians, often refer to the Eritrean past. Alike, presentations and speeches highlight the legacy of the Eritrean struggle and learn the young conference attendees about Eritrea's decisive past. Zerai for instance explained that Yemane Gebreab, the head of PFDJ and president advisor, consistently referred to Eritrea's history and to pride in his opening speech at the YPFDJ conference in Switzerland. Alike, additional conference documents revealed that specific sessions of the 2014 YPFDJ conference encompassed topics relating to Eritrean values, the collectivist nature of the Eritrean society, the influence of colonial regimes on Eritrean identity or the EPLF's contribution to the development of an Eritrean national identity. They further included parts, which encouraged participants to elaborate their understanding of Eritrean culture and identity in workshops and discussions (own notes from conference documents, 2014). By such means, the YPFDJ conferences transmit and impart knowledge about the decisive past and perpetuate the legacy of the Eritrean struggle as a base of Eritrean identity over the course of generations.

> We are determined to continue the legacy of the People's Front (Hizbawi Ginbar) that made Eritrea's independence a reality and to follow the footsteps of that unique generation by upholding its vision, principles and goals. (YPFDJ 2014, 8)

In addition, informing conference attendees about the situation surrounding Eritrea presents another important subject of the YPFDJ conferences. At various conferences, Yemane Gebreab gave speeches about the current situation in Eritrea, its development trajectories and about national and international challenges since independence (see Eritrean Ministry of Information 2016; Eritrea Profile 2014). Besides national issues, the unresolved border conflict with Ethiopia or the stance of the international community towards Eritrea thereby seem to be prominent themes (Tecle 2012, 79). Zerai who participated several YPFDJ conferences, stated that they frequently call attention to current external threats mainly referring to the United States:

> [At the conference in Switzerland], Yemane has talked about the enemies of Eritrea in his speech. About those, who are hostile towards Eritrea and intend to tear the Eritrean community apart. He would have stressed that Eritreans must hold together and make a stand against this external threat. (…). When talking about the enemy Yemane generally would have referred to the United States, which intended to divide the nation and harm Eritrea. And as soon as the conference attendees would hear "America", the audience gets loud and takes on the view that they have to defend against them.
>
> I asked Zerai about the reason for this assumption and he replied that it is due to the UN sanctions, which have urged and impelled by the United States. (Zerai, interview notes 2014)

The conference document then stresses that it is a duty of today's youth 'to continue the struggle … towards a prosperous, sustainable and viable nation' (YPFDJ 2014, 1). Thereby, they draw links between the past generation youths, which played a central role in the liberation struggle, and the YPFDJ. A senior speaker at the 2014 conference for instance compared the YPFDJ conference in some way with the town of Nakfa (Zerai, interview notes 2014), which served as the EPLF's headquarters during the struggle for independence that was never conquered by the Ethiopian troops and thus presents a strong symbol for Eritrea's nation-building (Conrad 2010, xi). Such direct comparisons help to maintain the state of struggle amongst the diaspora youth and ensure the generation-spanning continuance of Eritrea's "chosen trauma". Being threatened then tends to provoke the articulation and politicisation of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006, 197). By conveying an image of the Eritrean nation still being exposed to external threats, the YPFDJ conferences thus achieve to reinforce a sense of belonging to Eritrea.

To sum up, the YPFDJ conferences impart and maintain Eritrean national identity not only by instilling the legacy of the Eritrean struggle and passing on knowledge about the decisive Eritrean past to the diaspora youth. Moreover, they convey an image of the continuance Eritrea's struggle and the preservation of the countries decisive history. Thus, the YPFDJ conferences transmit and solidify the "chosen trauma" and

thereby promote the reinforcement of an Eritrean identity and a sense of belonging to Eritrea amongst the second-generation Eritreans through the decisive Eritrean past.

However, how do conference attendees for their part talk about the conferences and perceive the transmission of the decisive past and Eritrean identity? For the participants of this study, gathering with other peers generally appears to be the central component of the conference. Their main reason to participate the conference is to meet other second-generation Eritreans to whom they feel close to since they grew up in the diaspora too and thus may have experienced similar issues. However, Zerai mentioned that the participants of the YPFDJ conference in Switzerland only comprised of roughly one third young Eritreans grown up in the diaspora, while the rest were older Eritreans in their mid-thirties or above or Eritreans of the more recent immigration generation (Zerai, interview notes 2014). Statements of conference participants published online then reveal general satisfaction with the conference as participants have learned a lot about Eritrea or how they may contribute to Eritrea's development, which mainly seems to be inspired by the engagement of other YPFDJ members (statements of conference attendees, see Dehai 2009; Meadna n.d.). Similar statements also emerged during interviews and conversations. Nevertheless, various study participants perceived that the conferences sometimes do not encourage participants to critically reflect upon the presented matters.

> They call it a conference. They talk and continuously repeat themselves and constantly say the same thing. Sometimes I even feel this is some kind of indoctrination that does not get anyone any further. They just say what they have to say… And then they perform a short theatre or some celebration or so. In fact, this is not really necessary. We are there due to politics. We rather should discuss political matters and speak out our opinions instead of watching theatre plays and cheering "*Awet N'Hafash*" ["Victory to the Masses"; slogan of the liberation movement]. (Dawit, Interview 2014)

In Dawit's opinion, the conference teaches the young diaspora Eritreans one particular narrative rather than actively involve the diaspora youth in the discussion and allowing them to help shape the political process and progress. Alike, different study participants told that critical and challenging questions to the speakers often remained unaddressed. To them, this gave the impression that the YPFDJ conferences do not really intend to encourage discussions but rather to convey a certain narrative.

> Especially when talking about a conference [that took place around 2010] everybody [of the discussing second-generation Eritreans] got enthusiastic. Back then, they were discussing a lot during the conference, they said. They also were working productively in the workshops and not just have consumed, as it is rather the case today. Further, they pointed out that the conference was full with young diaspora Eritreans. However, in their

> opinion, the conferences then became worse and the quality would have decreased. Today, they just would tell you how it is and teach the youth the Eritrean history and everything associated with it. Compared with the earlier conferences, the conference today to their view rather instils ideologies than promotes discussions. (Own notes from group discussion, 2014)

If the YPFDJ conferences indeed have developed in such a way or if this view depends on other factors such as, for example, they getting older or having other expectations due to previous conference experiences, cannot be answered. However, it illustrates that they perceive the conferences no longer as a place of critical discussions but rather of promoting the predominant ideology aiming to integrate the diaspora youth in the nation-building process with little scope for playing an active role in its design and orientation.

In conclusion, young diaspora Eritreans who know YPFDJ conferences from own experiences, on the one hand enjoy the conferences because they enable the engagement and interaction with Eritrea, provide a chance to contribute to Eritrea's development and, most importantly, they present an opportunity to meet other diaspora Eritrean peers and friends. On the other hand, several study participants criticized that the conferences leave little room for critical discussions but rather transmit the ideologies of the former generation. These second-generation Eritreans then in fact rather feel limited in the possibility to form the political discussions and developments of Eritrea. However, irrespective the level of satisfaction, both the more content and the rather critical statements highlight the transmission of Eritrean values based on the legacy of the struggle for independency, respectively the generational transmission of the decisive Eritrean past, in order to promote and maintain Eritrean identity amongst the diaspora youth.

5 Conclusion

This paper discusses the process of reproducing and maintaining boundaries of belonging to Eritrea with a focus on the transmission of the Eritrean decisive past as a strategy to promote identity and a sense of belonging to the post-migrant generation. Bringing together the concepts of politics of belonging and the "chosen trauma" therefore presented a useful approach. The conceptual frame takes into account both unconscious processes and consciously promoted projects of politics of belonging. In doing so, it provides an appropriate analytical tool to shine light on possible strategies of promoting and passing on collective identity from one generation to the next.

For Eritreans born and/or raised in the diaspora the maintenance of their relations to Eritrea and their Eritrean identity in general is an issue. In this respect, the generational transmission of the decisive Eritrean past presents an important means. This paper illustrated two different modes, through which narratives and knowledge about this decisive Eritrean history are transmitted: within the family circle from

parents to children or through the YPFDJ's annual international conferences. It reveals that the conveyance of the Eritrean decisive history to second-generation Eritreans helps to ensure the maintenance of Eritrean values and ideologies based on the legacy of the struggle for independency and to reproduce and preserve the Eritrean national identity correspondingly. Within families this seems to be a rather unconscious process, although some parents deliberately put effort into it. However, the YPFDJ conferences seem to constitute a means of purposefully passing on the Eritrean decisive past to the diaspora youth. Furthermore, by emphasizing the continuance of the threat situation, the conferences both guarantee the maintenance of Eritrea's "chosen trauma" and reinforce the articulation of a common identity and a sense of belonging. It is important to note that the paper hereby addresses one particular aspect or activity of the YPFDJ, the annual international conferences, and does not refer to the YPFDJ and its objectives in its entirety. Yet, to infer that the YPFDJ in general simply aims to transmit Eritrean identity based on its principles without seeking the dialogue with the diaspora youth probably falls to short. However, the fact that it was hardly possible to motivate active members of the YPFDJ to participate in this study leads to the situation that a corrective perspective is missing in this paper. Thus, for instance the actual possibility of second-generation Eritreans to engage also actively and critical in the YPFDJ conferences respectively whether, how and to what extent the diaspora youth may take an active and contributory part in the nation-building process remains an open issue.

To sum up, the cross-generational transmission of the Eritrean "chosen trauma" and promoting and maintaining narratives about the country's decisive past may be understood in the sense of politics of belonging as a political project (see Yuval-Davis 2006) to reconfirm and promote national identity and a sense of belonging. Yet, the actual impacts of the transmission of the decisive Eritrean past on the second-generation Eritreans' identity and their everyday lives remains unclear since the effects of this transmission vary individually. However, the study demonstrates that second-generation Eritreans take over narratives of the former generation to some extent. This can be considered as an indication for the cross-generational transmission and maintenance of the Eritrean "chosen trauma" influencing, in whatever form, second-generation Eritreans' national identity. Besides, the circumstance that many second-generation Eritreans seem to go to YPFDJ conferences primarily to meet others of their kind furthermore indicates that the conference is not just about *Eritrean* belonging but also serves to develop and experience a *diaspora Eritrean* belonging. Thus, I argue that the YPFDJ conferences not only provide 'an alternative space of belonging' (Tecle 2012, 68) but also a space of alternative belonging.

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